In Search of Middle Indonesia

Middle Classes in Provincial Towns

Edited by

Gerry van Klinken and Ward Berenschot

BRILL

KITLV

Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde
Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies

In Search of Middle Indonesia

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June 2010: photo by S. Chris Brown.

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PREFACE

The collective writing effort that led to this book began with a brainstorming workshop at Gadjah Mada University in July 2005. We talked about the rapid social changes surrounding Indonesia's 1998 economic crisis, democratization, and decentralization. Previous work on the nation's local politics had made several of us aware of the mediated nature of these complex processes (Schulte Nordholt and Van Klinken 2007b; Van Klinken and Barker 2009; Aspinall and Van Klinken 2011). People in intermediate social and geographical locations influenced outcomes just by being able to pass on information and resources to others. Why had so little research been done on the middle classes in provincial towns who did much of this mediating work? we asked ourselves. We decided to put 'Middle Indonesia' on the research agenda.

In March 2007, most of the junior and senior researchers associated with the research programme 'In Search of Middle Indonesia' met for the first time in Leiden. Our host was the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), secretariat for the programme. We had been awarded generous funding by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) under the second Scientific Program Indonesia-Netherlands (SPIN). KITLV also contributed research funding of its own.

Altogether 17 researchers joined in - five PhD candidates (one funded from outside), four postdoctoral research fellows who came to KITLV for a year or more, and eight postdoctoral fellows on shorter visits. About half came from Indonesia, the rest from all over the world. Three Dutch institutions participated in the consortium along with KITLV and Gadjah Mada: the University of Amsterdam, Leiden University, and the Institute of Social Studies (The Hague). Together with six senior supervisor-researchers, and a healthy number of outside friends, we enjoyed many workshops and conferences, in Indonesia and the Netherlands. If this volume has any merit, it is due to the unforgettable collegiality of those meetings. Of the many people who pushed us to sharpen our thinking, two deserve special mention. The Oxford University economist Barbara Harriss-White, whose work on Indian provincial towns had inspired many of us, was a stimulating presence at the conference in September 2010. And Henk Schulte Nordholt, research director at KITLV, was our most unstintingly loyal supporter and critic throughout.

The present volume represents only a sample of the output the programme produced. Its authors were asked to explain what fresh light their empirical work shed on this extraordinarily productive yet poorly understood social zone we had called Middle Indonesia. We hope by this approach to stimulate others to focus on the exchanges taking place in the middle levels of this complex society.

As anyone who has done it can testify, producing a coherent edited volume is a time-consuming task. My colleague Ward Berenschot came to it after the Middle Indonesia researchers had gone home; yet he applied himself to his editorial task with energy and grace. All the authors and editors are grateful for two detailed and incisive anonymous reviewers reports obtained by the press. We thank S. Chris Brown for most of the photographs that grace this book. They show part of an exhibition commissioned by the programme and now hanging at KITLV. We also thank Klarijn Anderson-Loven, who went through the entire manuscript with an eagle's eye and prevented many errors and infelicities from reaching the printed page. Rosemarijn Hoefte, KITLV's liaison person at Brill, and Patricia Radder, senior editor at Brill, were unfailingly helpful throughout the publication process.

Gerry van Klinken
(coordinator, In Search of Middle Indonesia research programme, 2005–2012) Leiden, July 2013

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Map 1. The Indonesian Archipelago. Courtesy of KITLV, Leiden.

Fig. 1. TERNATE: Punk pals bask in the glow of friendship and the orange evening sky, in between running odd jobs for market vendors.
June 2010: photo by S. Chris Brown.

INTRODUCTION: DEMOCRACY, MARKETS AND THE ASSERTIVE MIDDLE

Gerry van Klinken

Di mana bumi dipijak di sana langit dijunjung – Where the feet touch the ground, there the sky is held up

('Respect local values', localist slogan common in provincial politics since the 1950s)

Introduction

Asia's middle classes are in the news. The story is bewitching. Not only are their numbers said to be shooting up towards half the total population, they are democratic and market-friendly. Indonesia's middle class too, according to this story, has exploded in the ten years from 1999–2009. An Asian Development Bank (hereafter: ADB) study of consumption patterns concluded it had grown from 25% to 43% in that period. This corresponds in absolute terms to more than a doubling in a decade from 45 million to 93 million people (ADB 2010:11–12). These astronomical figures are partly due to an accounting trick – the per-capita household expenditure threshold has been reduced to a very low US$2 a day. Anybody not in absolute poverty is assigned to the middle class. But the trick does bring to light a surge of millions of poor people who have recently crossed over the poverty threshold due to slight income rises. The increase was spread fairly evenly between urban and rural areas. A Roy Morgan survey conducted in Indonesia in 2012 showed that 74% owned a mobile phone and 81% lived in a household with a motorcycle. 'Middle-class' households, defined by the simultaneous possession of a television, a refrigerator and either a car or a motorcyle, constituted 45% of the population, up from 29% just two years earlier (Guharoy 2012). The latter figure is in the same league as that of the ADB, though derived from consumption rather than income patterns. By contrast, in 1980 just 8.9% of all households owned a motorcycle, and 5.6% a TV, leading to an estimate of 5% for the middle class then (Mackie 1990:100, quoting Crouch). Miraculously enough, the new middle class not only consumes

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but is also said to be democratic.[1] Other sweeping statistical reports have presented similar breathtaking conclusions, which hold for all Asia (Birdsall 2010; Kharas 2010; Ravallion 2009).

The present book examines this expanding Indonesian middle class up close. Instead of statistics, it contains ethnographic studies conducted in provincial towns, where most of its members live. Our studies confirm that the middle class is larger than previously assumed. The radically expanded notion of the middle class proposed by the Asian Development Bank, Roy Morgan and other institutions captures something real. But whereas these institutions are mainly interested in consumption, our ideas on the middle class have been shaped by more relational, political questions. Class is not essentially a question of income or expenditure categories; it is a political concept, intended to explain why differences remain between the behaviour of rich and poor people over matters of the common good. By watching how they behave, we have come to know a very different middle class than the one the ADB saw in the statistics. In our experience, the booming provincial middle class favours economic protectionism, wants more state and not less, and practises a flawed patronage democracy.

Less than by changing consumption patterns, we were driven to radically expand our idea of the Indonesian middle class by political events over the last twenty years. After 1998 it became evident that the elite political forces dominating the analysis no longer had the field to themselves. The strong push for decentralization amidst the democratization that followed did not come from the national elite, but from a much broader provincial middle class. Since *reformasi* a wave of fresh studies on contemporary Indonesia has shifted the focus from the 'commanding heights' to the middle reaches of the polity. They are conveniently summarized and partly reinterpreted in some of our own work (Van Klinken and Barker 2009; Schulte Nordholt and Van Klinken 2007b). Where the earlier studies had applied the term 'middle class' to what had actually been a national bourgeoisie ensconced within their gated communities on the green outskirts of Jakarta, it now became clear we could no longer understand Indonesia through their interests alone. A much broader group of people was evidently driving the new politics of democratic regional autonomy, the democratic mediascape, the assertiveness of Islamic

[1] John Parker, 'Burgeoning bourgeoisie: For the first time in history more than half the world is middle-class – thanks to rapid growth in emerging countries', *The Economist*, 12 February 2009.

conservatism, and (not to overlook the dark side) new forms of corruption and communal tension. Somehow it was necessary to expand our view of the politically active public to incorporate those who felt much more at ease with the great mass of the poor than the national elite had done. New research questions had led to a broadened notion of the middle class, though the exact definition was usually left unwritten.

This meant a sharp break with long-standing common wisdom among scholars of Indonesian society that the middle class constitutes no more than 10% of the whole society. Howard Dick in a seminal 1985 article quoted its size at a mere 16.6% in urban Java based on consumption criteria (which he linked to the 'privatization of the means of consumption') (Dick 1985). This translated to an even smaller percentage of the national population, and for decades afterwards scholars and politicians alike routinely said the middle class made up around 10% of the population. In our minds this figure is now outdated, both because many more people than this have become consumers and because recognizably middle class political behaviour has changed.

We have something to say both to the economic statisticians and to our fellow scholars of Indonesian society. To the statisticians we say, the possession of consumer durables says nothing about new political commitments. Simply reducing the income threshold to the poverty limit and calling everyone above that 'middle class' begs many analytical questions about political action. *The Economist* exemplified the problem when it breezily sketched all those earning just over US$2 a day as 'people who are not resigned to a life of poverty, who are prepared to make sacrifices to create a better life for themselves' (12 February 2009, quoting Brazilian economist Eduardo Giannetti da Fonseca). This is not only to suggest without any evidence that the poor are resigned to their fate, it begs the question what *kind* of action the non-poor are prepared to undertake to make their escape from poverty permanent, and how their action might differ from that of those who forgot long ago what poverty feels like. The only way to find out is to go to the field.

To our colleagues in the humanities and social sciences we say, the new political commitments are there if you care to look. Class links the more or less coherent material interests of a large group of people. One way to recognize it is when its members act politically in similar ways, even if they are hardly aware of their commonalities. This implies a historical approach that goes well beyond statistics; it moreover suggests there can be no standard definition of a particular class, but that it depends on the question the researcher wants to ask. During the New Order, scepticism

about the common assumption that the middle class sponsors democracy made a great deal of sense. The assumption hardly seemed to apply during Indonesia's New Order when the middle class was on the rise. Indeed, the first studies of the middle class in Indonesia were framed by questions about the stability of the authoritarian New Order (1966–1998). Studies focusing on the middle class as a political force in effect had in view a national bourgeoisie confined to metropolitan areas. This is perhaps the real reason why scholars who have been writing about the middle class since the New Order have also been reluctant to let go of the 10% estimate. The focus of their studies was the hegemonic power of national elites. They sought to identify social support for a strong centralizing and authoritarian state (Hill 1994; Schwarz 1994). A widely deployed idiom of orderly 'state corporatism' drew on parallels in the junta-led countries of Latin America (King 1982).[2] Subsequent studies of middle-class lifestyles similarly had in mind metropolitan consumerism – the 'new rich' (Pinches 1999; Robison and Goodman 1996), who were 'lost in mall' (Van Leeuwen 2011) – but these tended to conform to this elitist idiom rather than challenge it. Yet today hardly anyone doubts that Indonesia is a consolidated democracy, albeit one with 'adjectives'. The reason is not only to be found in intra-elite disunity or a change of heart among that 10% at the top of Indonesian society; it also arises from a new assertiveness among a much larger proportion of the population, particularly out in the provinces. This book aims to bring to life that surprisingly large group we may readily call 'middle class' for its self-confident consumerism as well as for its new political activism.

Recovering the 'Middle' in Middle Class

An eloquent argument for paying attention to a much larger middle class than commonly assumed has been made by Diane Davis (2004). She began by regretting the excessively narrow notion of 'middle class' that had occupied scholars of the Third World after the 1960s. In the 1950s,

[2] Other studies emphasizing middle-class support for Indonesian authoritarianism include Tanter and Young 1990 and Dhakidae 2001. Similar studies appeared on other Asian countries (D. Jones 1998; Koo 1991; Masataka 2003). A 'new' middle class of professionals and managers emerged alongside the 'old' middle class of senior bureaucrats, but this class, too, was restricted to the big cities (Arita 2003; Funatsu and Kagoya 2003). One author who bucked the trend by depicting a broader middle class was Solvay Gerke (2000), who defined them as the 'just enough' class (*kelas cukupan*), situated between the poor and the rich.

optimistic modernization theorists had thought the middle classes would be transformative and defined them broadly; but as one newly independent democracy after another collapsed into authoritarianism this optimism wilted. The progressive influences of a broad middle class appeared to have been largely chimerical. After that, middle classes virtually disappeared from mainstream social science research. The dependency theory that largely took the place of modernization theory continued to speak of 'middle classes', but in practice it had raised the membership threshold and now saw them as effectively part of the ruling elite. They belonged to one extreme in a highly polarized society, in which the other extreme consisted of 'popular masses'. D. Davis (2004:57) concluded that while 'the extremes were theorized as most relevant, the middle classes were not considered relevant'.

The down-side to this focus on extremes was that large numbers of people who did not belong to either extreme were left out. Explaining change by incorporating a middle in which polarization is less marked certainly complicates the analysis – on this more below. But the evidence that classes in the 'middle' do act in distinctive ways has been mounting for Indonesia since *reformasi* in 1998, and it forces us to deal with the added complexity. It includes an enthusiasm for democracy and decentralization that is uncharacteristic of national elites. The same goes for provincial protests against the central government's bias towards global capital – leading to local government pressure to partly nationalize foreign mining companies, for example. Diane Davis coined the expression 'disciplinary regimes of development' for those historical trajectories in which the pure interests of global capital are 'disciplined' by middle classes with interests of their own. Those interests might, for example, include smaller, family-based businesses, or rural investment. Middle classes who manage to impose such discipline are defined more broadly than the national bourgeoisie. They may include state workers, the urban self-employed, and small-scale farmers.[3]

Somewhat earlier, Rueschemeyer, Huber Stephens and Stephens (1992) had also argued for a renewed focus on non-elite classes on the grounds that they play a distinctive role. They charted the histories of a large number of nations in the twentieth century to learn why most capitalist

[3] Davis plots the likelihood of middle classes allying themselves with either workers or the bourgeoisie on the basis of that nation's particular history of industrialization – from 'early' late industrialization in Latin America to 'late' late industrialization in East Asia. This argument need not detain us now.

economies were also democracies. A little like Davis was to do later, they discovered that democracy comes about not because capitalists want it but because less privileged classes push for it. Capitalism produces contradictions, and these in turn boost demands for political equality by non-elite classes and class coalitions. Where working classes provide most of the energy for these demands, democratic reform is the most inclusive. Middle classes are more ambivalent. They will resist democracy if that means also empowering the poor, but will support it if it means gaining an edge over the national bourgeoisie, notably on regional issues. It is precisely this ambivalent role that Indonesia's middle classes, now broadly conceived, have played since Independence.

Insights from political economy such as those provided by D. Davis, and Rueschemeyer, Huber Stephens and Stephens will help us answer questions about democracy in Indonesia. But we need more: a spatial dimension. Part of the impulse for a renewed interest in a broad middle class arose from the turbulent process of decentralization that took place at the same time as democratization. Its very territoriality forced us to think about political geography, 'the study of how politics is informed by geography' (M. Jones, Jones and Woods 2004:2). The natural setting for the middle classes who provided the political steam pressure for both democracy and decentralization was not the globalized metropolis, but the provincial town – a place that foreign researchers rarely visit. The self-employed medium scale entrepeneurs, the private and public sector clerks, the Golkar apparatchiks, the teachers – and the youth aspiring to these positions – who populate this book, belong to a world of their own. They are only partly assimilated with the national bourgeoisie. They may share elite global consumerist aspirations, but their economic interests differ. Their incomes are less secure, their networks of relations more local (where they may be more intense than in the big city), their religion more conservative – in short, their horizon is more parochial. Yet their control of the towns gives them a national clout that belies their relative lack of affluence.

We were not the first social scientists to turn our attention to the urban environment in Indonesia, yet the field has been surprisingly underpopulated. Human geographers have been its main practitioners.[4]

[4] For example, Franck 1993; Nas 1986; Persoon and Cleuren 2002; Titus and Hinderink 1998; Titus and Van der Wouden 1998. In addition, a large and valuable body of unpublished Indonesian theses and dissertations on the sociology of individual towns (for example, at Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta) remains practically unexamined by foreign scholars.

These scholars offer valuable material on uneven urbanization, urban bias, employment and urban–rural relations (on the last of which, see also Leinbach 2004; Rotgé, Mantra and Ryanto Rijanta 2000). Larger questions of the economy and politics, however, have rarely been posed in a spatial way. Howard Dick, one of the few who did pose them that way, remarked perceptibly that most have treated the economy as 'a peculiarly disembodied thing, having a sectoral structure but no identified spatial structure' (2002: xxi). Much the same can be said of many political studies, which have treated a politics of elites and (sometimes) masses as if they do not have to span great physical distances. Towns are the nodes in these interactions across distance. One of the first major studies of the provincial town in Indonesia done with such large questions in mind was the Mojokuto project conducted by a research team from MIT in the 1950s. Clifford Geertz was to become its most famous member. Perhaps because what they did was for so long not repeated, their conclusions proved highly influential. In our opinion, however, they also fell short of an adequate explanation. This book attempts to show why.

Questions

We felt the post-1998 surge of studies on local politics in Indonesia had moved the subject of Middle Indonesia back to centre stage. To draw attention to the many productive puzzles that a focus on the surprisingly assertive (lower) middle classes in provincial towns can help to illuminate, we coined a term for this social zone: Middle Indonesia. The term is deliberately ambiguous. It may suggest Middle America, with John Updike's 'clean, sad scent of linoleum' (even if Middle Indonesia probably smells more of deep-fried *gorengan* than of linoleum). This is where the inquisitive must go to meet a 'mainstream' American, as opposed to a member of some minority class, ethnicity, gender or culture. Middle England and Middle Australia have similar connotations of the conservative lower-middle-class majority. At the same time the term Middle Indonesia suggests a mediating function between two extremes – between upper and lower, or centre and periphery. This second meaning is likely to reveal a darker side, in which the middle extracts a surplus from its hinterland (as in Cronon's (1992) magnificent study of Chicago and the Great West), or in which numerous mid-sized towns mediate the imposition of central administrative order on the countryside (as in the long discussion that started with Christaller; see C. Smith 1976).

By the time we began this project, it had become obvious to us from previous work (including our own, referenced above) that Middle Indonesia generates significant political forces at the national level. Our task was now to explain how that came about. Our leading question could be formulated as follows: Why is Middle Indonesia so influential, locally and in Indonesia as a whole, though it is neither particularly rich nor particularly central in geographic terms? This question would lead us to focus on agency in particular localities, and force us to identify who the actors were. Answering it would take us into three related thematic arenas, namely class, the state, and everyday culture. Class, and questions related to the market, was the most fundamental of these, and would inform the other two. Underlying all our work lies the question: How conflictual are the power relations that make Middle Indonesia influential?

Our research questions were informed by recent work done by others elsewhere in Asia. Two scholars were particularly important to us. One had written on the political economy of an expanded and largely lower middle class, the other on the spaces in which these lower-middle classes were the masters, namely provincial towns. To begin with the first, the question the economist Barbara Harriss-White posed in her work on provincial India was: How might an understanding of this expanded middle class help explain political differences between them and both the national bourgeoisie as well as the poor? In an agenda-setting book on this question, she emphasized the informality of what she called 'the economy of the 88 per cent'. While everyone has heard of the Indian economic miracles worked in the steel mills of Jamshedpur and the skyscrapers of Mumbai, this formal corporate economy is largely insulated from another, much more populous and traditional economy that retains a great deal of vitality. She wrote: 'While India is fast being reinvented discursively, there is a great deal of continuity in the real economy at the local level' (Harriss-White 2003:71). The economy of small-town India in which she did her research has almost no modern industry and revolves around agriculture and trade. Almost all labour in these sectors is informal. Where the formal law is ineffective, people regulate contractual relations through personal networks and on the basis of local norms. The lower-middle-class traders, small-scale producers, agrarian elites and local state officials who dominate this economy incorporate the poor into it on highly discriminatory clientelistic terms. Other poor groups, such as the *dalits*, are excluded completely simply on the basis of cultural norms. In Indonesia, too, two thirds of the labour force is informal, in the sense of working in the unregistered economy.

The second piece of research that informed our own broke open the question of spatiality. What difference does it make that these surprisingly assertive lower middle classes are most visible in provincial towns? How might the various types of flows passing through provincial towns help explain their political influence within the nation? In an important book that we had partly seen in draft, Malcolm McKinnon (2011) compared the human geography of three large Asian cities with three provincial ones. Whereas life in the cities, he concluded, is shaped to a great extent by the kinds of globalizing processes that have made Asia's megacities look much like megacities anywhere in the world, that is not (yet) the case in Asia's provincial towns. According to McKinnon, two other processes are equally, if not more, important there, namely urbanization and nation-building. In Europe these processes flourished in the nineteenth century and were essentially complete by the twentieth, but in Asia they are contemporary. Urbanization has long stabilized in Europe at around 80%, but in Indonesia it is still in progress and only half complete. Global production chains have penetrated to these provincial towns to a far lesser extent than to the megacities (as Barbara Harriss-White also argued). The wage differentials between town and countryside that drive urbanization arise more from a vigorous domestic capitalism than from the global economy. Nation-building, meanwhile, is the process of identity-formation that takes place when the child of peasant parents comes to town to go to school and stays to seek a better future. This, too, is a contemporary process. People are still alive who remember Indonesia's anti-colonial revolution in the late 1940s. Most of the identity issues that occupy people in town are regional or national rather than global in scope. One reason is, surely, that the state is a major source of employment for educated people in many Indonesian provincial towns. The state has a presence in these towns because it is essentially territorial – it needs to be everywhere to retain its sovereignty.

If these hunches based on preliminary reading were to prove correct, then Middle Indonesia promised to considerably complicate the received picture of a globalizing, consumerist and democratic middle class.

How We Did Our Studies

Indonesia's urbanization level was 42% in 2006 (Firman, Kombaitan and Pradono 2007). Contrary to the popular image of exploding Asian megacities, about half of those urban Indonesians live in towns of less than a

million. Indonesia is thought to have about 170 provincial towns with populations between 50,000 and a million (projections calculated from appendices in Rutz 1987). They are scattered all over the map. About 80% of the population lives within the sphere of influence of towns like those that are the subject of this book. Considering that provincial town residents make up a quarter of the world's fourth most populous nation, that they are found in every corner of the vast archipelago and that their world touches practically everything that happens in the country, it is surprising they have not been paid more scholarly attention. The doubling of the ADB's 'middle class' also took place in these towns. The streets are filled with an exploding number of motorcycles and mobile-phone outlets. Yet foreigners hardly know these towns, and thus they go home without having their preconceived ideas challenged about what this urbanizing transition means economically and politically. Most of the authors in this book are anthropologists rather than geographers, and we confess we came rather late to the discovery that geography matters. Like new converts to an old faith, however, we now believe the most important next step in the burgeoning study of decentralized Indonesia is to become more sensitive to the implications of geography.

We chose to do ethnographic work in a few of Indonesia's hundreds of provincial towns. We expected the effort put into doing 'thick' observation in Middle Indonesia to lead to insight into issues of national importance. As Ben White correctly points out in this volume, we studied various social processes taking place *in* these towns, rather than the towns themselves. Each town became a project for one PhD project. We were looking for towns with populations under a million, because big cities are likely to have dynamics of their own. The choice was partly made for us on practical grounds such as the knowledge and access our Indonesian partners at Gadjah Mada University had of and in the regions. The main underlying divide in our minds was economic. At least two of our towns should have economies that were largely market-driven, while two should have economies that were largely state-driven. For the former we settled on Pekalongan and Cilegon, two towns in Java with substantial private sectors, and for the latter on Ternate and Kupang, both outside Java and with middle classes dominated by officialdom. Later we were joined by a fifth PhD candidate with funding of her own, who studied Pontianak, an outer-island town with a mixed state-market economy. Some PhD projects focused on political economy – those on Kupang and Pekalongan – while others focused particularly on youth – those on Pontianak, Cilegon and Ternate. The youth studies have been brought together elsewhere

(Spyer and White 2012). A number of postdoctoral researchers also came to work in the programme. Some looked at the same four or five towns, while others went elsewhere. Only a selection of the research is included in the present volume.[5]

Looking back, our learning trajectories looked less like the boot imprints left by a disciplined platoon on the march than like the swooping arcs a flock of birds trace in the air. Certainly this introduction represents a work of synthesis rather than a summary of everything everyone wants to say in their respective chapters. In the first place we have gotten to know a huge cast of unforgettable characters: Wenty Marina Minza's Lia, a smartly dressed 24-year-old in Pontianak who wants nothing so much as a civil servant's job but who worries that she belongs to the wrong ethnic group to get one; Cornelis Lay's Crazy Wadu, a Kupang vagrant in the 1970s who walked around town naked and did 'yoga' every day, sleeping with his head down and his legs in the air next to the bridge. So many ordinary people become immortal in these accounts of little provincial dramas. But we always attempted to discern in their personal stories those much larger social processes that were shaping their lives. It is to these processes that we now turn.

Why so Influential?

If the national significance of an assertive Middle Indonesia seems obvious today, it was not to the first scholars who turned to this subject. Since their work continues to resonate today, it is worthwhile revisiting it briefly. These researchers tended to see provincial towns as passive zones of top-down diffusion rather than as assertive places. The first post-war students of the Indonesian town were inspired by modernization theory. They saw the town as a zone of transmission. They wanted to know how well it was facilitating the gradual diffusion of modernity to ordinary folk around the country. The Australian Lance Castles (1967) studied Islamic cigarette manufacturers in one provincial town to see if they were developing a distinctive middle-class ethos of 'this-worldly' secularism (not many were). Most famous of all is the series of studies researched in the 1950s by Clifford Geertz and his colleagues of the MIT Indonesia project,

[5] The full list of publications, funding and institutional details can be found in the KITLV annual reports (http://www.kitlv.nl/home/Organization?subpage_id=349).

centring on a Javanese town they called 'Mojokuto'.[6] When the MIT group went to Mojokuto they did not consider that the town's relationship with the national centre could be anything other than dependent. They saw it as the (distressingly inert) terminus for modernizing ideas from the centre. Clifford Geertz in particular was impressed with the degree to which this cultural frontier remained immobilized by tradition. The town was a 'no man's land', he wrote (C. Geertz 1963b:16). He thought this 'provisional, in-between, "no man's land" quality of Mojokuto social life' was 'its most outstanding characteristic.' Stagnation caused by a massive influx of resourceless and fatalistic peasants was also the essence of the Indonesian provincial town depicted in an influential paper by Warren Armstrong and Terry McGee (1968). Their term 'urban involution' drew on Geertz's idea of 'agricultural involution'.

The successful diffusion of global and national modernizing influences through the town remains one of the major criteria urban geographers use to assess the benefits of urbanization (Rondinelli 1983). It features strongly in the most systematic inventory of the history and functions of Indonesian towns we have today, by Rutz (1987). Maps portray towns as nodes in a gradually spreading and hierarchical network of roads, shipping routes and administrative districts. In an overwhelmingly rural archipelago, towns grew up to fill the needs of modern administration, first colonial and then republican, as this penetrated ever-remoter regions. They also serviced local economies of trade, plantations, mining and manufacturing that followed colonial pacification in the nineteenth century. Networks diffuse innovations and thus help build social capital. They hold the country together.

Clearly this ecological perspective on the role of towns in the social landscape captures something real. Our own studies sometimes confirmed the diffusive character of the town, particularly in culture. Ideas and resources that originate in bigger cities continue to flow *through* the town to the surrounding countryside. Think of government programmes, new religious practices or global fashions. Every town in Indonesia now radiates 'Indonesianness'. Even the streetscapes look the same everywhere. People move around these networks in all directions, driven by their own desires as well as by the authority that radiates from

[6] While Clifford Geertz was the most prolific member of this project (C. Geertz 1963b, 1965,1968, to mention only those concerned with towns), other members who produced important work on towns in their rural context were Donald Fagg (1958), Robert Jay (1963), and Hildred Geertz (1963).

its nodes.[7] Town is an attractive destination for rural young people, a modern settlers' town with its own pleasures. Migrant Malays come to Pontianak town to study (in Wenty Marina Minza's chapter). Farm kids come to Cilegon town with their parents, who, however, still expect them to behave like rural kids (as Suzanne Naafs (2012) has described in her dissertation on Middle Indonesia). At times the provincial town also attracts people from the metropole. Post-1998 decentralization made provincial towns once more attractive to Jakarta-siders (Vel 2007). Physical distances have shrunk rapidly in recent years, also for non-elite travellers. Indonesia's airports, built for a tiny flying elite, are crammed with small-town folk clutching budget tickets. Internet and mobile telephony costs almost nothing.[8] Some elites commute to and from Jakarta every weekend. For them, the provincial town has practically merged with the metropolis. For non-elites the town remains more a home (the difference produces a provincial brain-drain), but even for them, often a temporary one. In short, towns are nodes of mobility. This shrinking of physical distance has implications for national integration. Provincial town politics are more like metropolitan politics than they used to be (the state comes to the provincial town, as Deasy Simandjuntak (2009) puts it). The fact that Indonesia no longer suffers from the inchoate rural revolts that afflicted it in the 1950s must be at least partly due to this shrinkage of distance.

However, processes of smooth diffusion are only half the story of the provincial town. They overlook the political agency that emerged in the towns as a result of these very flows. Since the late 1980s, urban studies around the world have taken an active interest in agency over ecology (Gottdiener and Feagin 1988; Savage, Warde and Ward 2003). Even as the 1950s American researchers sweated in somnolent Mojokuto feeling that little was happening, people in somewhat larger towns such as Padang and Menado, in the regions beyond Java, were organizing armed revolts against Jakarta. Assertive processes originate in the town itself and are

[7] Diane Davis (1999) helpfully depicted a network space spanning four dimensions – geographical space, class, institutions and culture. Each dimension is hierarchical. Some places are more desirable than others (halls of power); classes are by definition hierarchical; some institutions have greater power than others; most nations have a dominant culture. People want to move towards the end that offers them better chances – closer to the state – hence urbanization, upward social mobility and political and cultural struggles.

[8] Many flights now cost less than the boatfare, as 4 or 5 airlines compete to service a single provincial town; internet cafes cost 50 eurocents an hour; mobile telephony costs a tenth in Indonesia of what it does in Europe; roads, particularly in Java, are full of fast, cheap and frequent buses.

turned against the metropolis, or against the village, or against other classes within town. Think of demands for local autonomy, resistance to global markets, or exploitation of the poor. Even as the MIT team was beginning to draw its conclusions about the town as a 'no man's land', the Dutch sociologist W.F. Wertheim was writing about the enormous dynamism in the towns. By the 1950s he had been in the archipelago for decades. His book on Indonesian social change focused on agency in the urban environment long before the paradigmatic shift of the 1980s. He wrote:

> This new Indonesian culture was to be a typically urban culture....However small a percentage of Indonesians may have lived in the towns, these towns were the most dynamic element in Indonesian society and thus assumed a very great influence on the social and political events throughout the archipelago. (Wertheim 1959:185; see also Wertheim 1958.)

Indeed, Wertheim was not alone. A perceptive young American researcher in Indonesia at the time, Gerald Maryanov, described who the provincial folk were who provided this dynamism. They were an urbanized, semi-educated group of non-agricultural workers, then numbering about 2 million out of the national population of 82 million. It was they who created public opinion: 'The definition of problems takes place within this group, and it sets the climate of opinion in which problems are discussed and solved. We would further suggest that the desirability or acceptability of particular policies will be entirely determined here....This...group is characterized [also]...by its distance from the cultural patterns of the ideal type of traditional village community' (Maryanov 1959:63).

In one of the ironies of academic history, it was one of the MIT researchers who put her finger most precisely on who this new middle class was. Hildred Geertz's (1963) long neglected chapter still provides us with a good baseline description of town life. Whereas the metropoles of Jakarta, Surabaya, Bandung, Medan, Palembang and Makassar were cosmopolitan, the provincial towns, she felt, were primarily local in orientation. They had grown rapidly but not through industrialization. Trade and government dominated their economies. The 'urban middle class' she saw there was broad in scope, even if its membership was then far smaller than today. It consisted of clerks and shopkeepers working in Chinese-owned retail and wholesale stores, of the conservatively Islamic owners of smaller shops and market stalls, and of government-salaried staff in administration, schools and the army. Culturally, the wealthy and educated in town adhered to an 'Indonesian metropolitan superculture', characterized by political ideologies of egalitarianism, socialism, economic

development and national advancement; a liking for colloquial Indonesian language and popular films; and a desire for overseas travel and automobiles. Far below this risk-taking group with a metropolitan outlook was the 'urban proletariat', underemployed in the bazaar and 'only a step away in terms of sophistication and skills and non-labour resources from the countryside in which most of them were not long ago born'. As social status moved down towards the poor urban masses, the culture shifted towards 'a large variety of traditional ethnic ways of life'.

Today, a focus on agency in urban studies is surely unavoidable. In India as in Indonesia, urban landscapes were created by middle classes exercising their political muscle. They began to flex those muscles during and shortly after the struggle for independence. The state socialist measures introduced at that time worked mainly to their advantage. After the regional revolts of 1957 the government under President Sukarno introduced measures that penalized large capital and subsidized politically assertive provincial middle classes. The measures included politically driven import and export licensing, nationalization and the virtual disappearance of personal taxation (Mackie 1971). Under the New Order, state rhetoric turned against this class and towards the virtues of direct foreign investment that rather favoured a national bourgeoisie. Yet the oil boom allowed the government at the same time to continue to subsidize provincial middle classes to buy their loyalty, in ways the World Bank at the time considered inefficient. Thus Frans Hüsken (1989) discovered that New Order policy had actually encouraged rural 'decommercialization' while creating rural elites with strong state connections but weak entrepreneurial capacities.

After 1998, Padang, Menado and many other towns were again the scene of rowdy demands by its urban middle classes for special consideration by central state institutions in Jakarta. They succeeded in forcing Jakarta to match its post-1998 democratizing measures with a 'big bang' decentralization programme handing budgetary and appointment powers to the regions. They then set about successfully demanding the subdivision of administrative districts into numerous new districts, each to be graced by a new district capital built by well-connected local contractors. In fifteen years since the mid-1990s, the number of districts in Indonesia has more than doubled to over 450, in the face of opposition from Jakarta which regards subdivision as wasteful (Booth 2011). It is true that provincial towns no longer take up arms against Jakarta (though there is a rural separatist revolt in Papua and until recently another in Aceh), but several of them did host more or less serious communal violence in the chaotic

transition to democracy around the year 2000. Some provincial capitals such as Pekanbaru and Samarinda even threatened to secede, 'like East Timor'. The demands were not new; they had merely come out into the open. Such threats coming from the far-flung, resource-rich regions of Indonesia had been voiced quietly within the halls of power throughout the New Order. Expressed in velvet voices rather than with guns, they forced Jakarta to institutionalize a system of government funding for the regions that was determined less by performance than by loyalty:

> A massive patronage system was created in which the central government awarded local governments with budget allocation in exchange for loyalty. Budget allocations were not based on performance or need, but rather on how close local governments were with the central government, and how well local elites could lobby decisions-makers in Jakarta. The resulting rent-seeking system was effective in rapidly building the economy, but was not transparent or sustainable and created great regional dissatisfactions (there are demands for independence from all the above-mentioned resource-rich provinces). (Antlöv 2003:143.)

After *reformasi* the negotiations between centre and regions became far more openly political. Resource-rich districts managed to keep more fiscal revenue for themselves, thus depriving resource-poor ones of development funds. As before, the state patronage benefited not only the elite who negotiated it, but also the thousands of ordinary public servants who got paid for spending most of the day doing little but chatting in government offices all over a town like Kupang, as Sylvia Tidey demonstrates in her Middle Indonesia dissertation (2012a). Here the 'middle' was asserting itself in a way that belied passivity, and that was not entirely within the control of the commanding heights. Local desires to gain more control over the resources available from the increasingly affluent central state after 1998 led to chaotic competition that sometimes turned violent. Investigating this conflictual side to some provincial town life was for one of us an important precursor to the Middle Indonesia programme (Van Klinken 2007).

Class

Let us now zoom in on the middle class in its provincial-town setting. What does it look like up close in the early 2000s? What sources of economic power does it tap? How do its members relate to the poor in their immediate environs? How wide and how deep is the gap that separates them from the poor within town and beyond it? If the gap amounts to a

ravine, any democracy that empowers both sides is likely to be difficult to achieve. Would we find, as the Lynds did in provincial America (Lynd and Lynd 1929, 1937), a town riven by internal class conflicts? Or would our towns look, as Lloyd Warner and Paul Lunt's (1941) did elsewhere in America, and as Clifford Geertz's did in Central Java, like a peaceful, integrative middle, a smooth transition zone?

A provincial urban middle class consisting of bureacrats, traders, medium-scale businesspeople, clerks and professionals are central actors in our stories. On the national level, these occupations largely belong to a lower middle class, but within town they are more likely to be seen as an 'elite'. The chapters by Nico Warouw and Cornelis Lay make this contrast particularly clear. This complexity was one reason why the researchers in this book had difficulty agreeing on a common nomenclature or even a precise definition of the class of people in question. Some stayed with the term 'intermediate class', as first proposed by Michal Kalecki (1972) with its petit bourgeois associations (notably Ben White and Nico Warouw, following Harriss-White 2003). Most preferred the more common term (lower) middle class. Although this does not have the same precise association with intermediary political action, it has been adopted in the present chapter because it is likely to be more familiar to the reader.

Of greatest interest to us was political action emerging from this group of people towards other groups. As far as influence is concerned, its members still resemble the political public described in the 1950s, whether defined in terms of culture as by Hildred Geertz (1963); of newspaper readership as by Herbert Feith (1962:109–113); or of education as by Gerald Maryanov (1959:63). But the middle class has grown in size. At the same time its members share the consumerism familiar from the ADB reports and other studies of the middle class done in bigger cities. They enjoy considerable mobility – flying to Jakarta is now affordable for them from almost anywhere. Their career choices are wide open (see the chapter here by Wenty Marina Minza). Culturally, many can still be seen as adherents of a metropolitan superculture, interested in contemporary forms of religious pluralism (see Noorhaidi Hasan's contribution to this volume). Their religious and even their eating habits differ markedly from those in the kampung class in their own town, as Cornelis Lay shows in his childhood reminiscences set in 1970s Kupang.

Recent studies of class tensions in urban Indonesia, though few in number, led us to expect no easy answers to the question of their severity. Some have emphasized rather stark class differences. Howard Dick begins his economic history of twentieth-century Surabaya with a focus on

industrialization and ends with the human-rights abuse that the resultant land grabs caused among poor urban residents. His final chapter portrays rather brutal 'class conflict' between a bureaucratic indigenous middle class and impoverished kampung dwellers (Dick 2002:472). Kathryn Robinson's (1986) study of a new mining town in Sulawesi showed that, as the village of Soroako grew into a town, a class structure began to emerge that created new ideological and cultural forms in everyday life. However, others cautioned that prevailing tensions did not seem to follow conventional class lines. In his theoretically sophisticated history of Padang, Freek Colombijn (1994) found that 'conventional class analysis', such as that being advocated for urban studies at the time by the sociologists Manuel Castells and Henri Lefebvre, was insufficient to explain social relations in his town. Instead of cleavages based on possession of the means of production, Colombijn saw a (Dahrendorfian) conflict between those in and out of power. Like many provincial cities and towns in Indonesia, but unlike Surabaya, Padang had and has little industry to speak of. Trade and state employment dominate its economy. Colombijn's observation is important for our search for Middle Indonesia, which looks for it not in Jakarta and Surabaya, but in the more numerous middle-size towns around the archipelago.

Here we offer a synthetic alternative interpretation that yet gives a central place to class. The argument goes as follows. The politically active core of the provincial middle class is indigenous and bureaucratic, with their commercial allies. (Members of the ethnic Chinese middle class, whose wealth is purely commercial, until recently hardly participated in formal politics, though many have long maintained backroom political relations.) The source of indigenous wealth in the middle class is on the whole not control over the means of production (rich batik producers in Pekalongan are an exception), but control over rents they obtain from the state or from managerial positions. In one notable reinterpretation of Karl Marx by Aage Sørensen (2000), rent-seeking replaces the labour theory of value. The exploiters have access to assets that earn them rents while the exploited do not. Assets do not have to be money but can be many other things, such as knowledge (education) or official power. Clearly the power to deny others similar access is a form of exploitation. The power provincial bureaucrats exercise, in other words, is also a kind of class power. They wield that power in formal bureaucratic ways. Education is an important qualification for entry to this privileged group in town. Those who finish high school have a chance of making it into the public service or even a big firm in Jakarta, while those without are likely to get stuck

selling mobile-phone cards in front of the local mall (as Wenty Marina Minza richly illustrates). But bureaucratic power is also expressed in informal, social and cultural ways. Corruption and ethnic, religious or kinship favouritism are widespread in provincial towns, as Minza and Savirani both make clear. It is a central part of the bureaucratic politics in town.

Informality in the economy is the crucial matrix for local-elite power. Middle Indonesia's economy is strikingly informal. More than half of all urban workers are informal, and in the trade and agricultural sectors the figures rise above 80% (Angelini and Hirose 2004:6–9). Jan Newberry writes evocatively in the present volume that 'the kampung class is profoundly shaped through its economic role in the Indonesian economy' [providing] 'cooking candy to be sold, name card printing, piecework labour, haircutting, a small snack and drink stall, numbers games, as well as the spiritual help to win at them'. Globalization actually stimulates growth in the informal sector rather than deflating it as people move into formal industry. An authoritative study by Alejandro Portes writes that the informal economy is 'the realm where the embeddedness of economic action in social networks and the unanticipated consequences of purposive official action emerge most clearly' (2010:161). Socially embedded power plays out within the informal economy, operating through local cultural values to produce mechanisms of exclusion as well as inclusion. Examples in this book are the religious teachers who exploit contract labour in Cilegon, and the ethnic Dayak bosses who seize bureaucratic turf in Pontianak. Part of this informal economy is moreover illegal, consisting for example of unregistered timber cutting, prostitution or the smuggling of stolen motorcycles, drugs or oil. This domain, too, is dominated by provincial middle classes (including corrupt police, military and state prosecutors) rather than by the poor or the very rich.

The political power developed at the intersection of the formal and the informal can be exercised downward against the local poor, or outward towards the central state. We consider the first here, and the second in a subsequent section on the state. Nico Warouw in this book describes political operators in the town of Cilegon who finance their political careers by winning informal labour contracts under the corporate social responsibility (CRS) programme of the gigantic steel manufacturer Krakatao. For factory managers, having locals paint their sheds and maintain their machinery through CRS represents small change. But for the underemployed in Cilegon's kampung communities it is a lifeline, even if it means working for an unscrupulous local boss who gives

them zero protection on labour standards. In the chapter by Minza, poor job-seekers place great hopes on possible patrons in their environs, but the rich can afford to follow their ideals of self-realization while enjoying the services of the poor. Unlike the socially isolated tycoons of Jakarta, lower-middle-class provincial actors, such as these bureaucrat-politicians-cum-labour brokers, can swing power in the informal system of social relationships in which they are immersed. Such 'non-price institutions for achieving social order', as the new institutional economist Janet Landa (1994) put it, dominate life in the provincial town and its informal economy to a far greater extent than they do in the city with its skyscrapers and factories.

Gauging the level of tension these power differences generate was not an easy task. Ben White points out in his chapter on this question that 'you don't find classes unless you look for them'. He suggests that researchers in the 1950s Mojokuto project did not look. Not all of us looked equally hard, but even those who did, did not notice a high degree of class polarization. At the time that we studied them, our five towns were largely peaceful. Everyday discourse in town is not strongly class-oriented. Indeed, the Gini index of inequality is somewhat lower in Indonesia's trade-, agriculture- and bureaucracy-dominated provinces than in the industrialized cities (Akita and Lukman 1999). The town has an internal spatial structure consisting of business and government quarters, middle-class housing, and lower-class kampungs, not so different from that once described by Wertheim (1959:180–1). The level of spatial segregation by income class is not as high in most provincial towns as it is in big cities such as Medan or Jakarta.[9] The slums are less wretched, the villas of the rich somewhat less ostentatious, and the spatial segregation less clear than in Jakarta, Sylvia Tidey finds in her survey of Kupang in this volume. We think it is fair to conclude that Middle Indonesia is relatively unpolarized. Inasmuch as Middle Indonesia is dominated by a broad middle class, that class, too, is 'non-polar'. Both Barbara Harriss-White and Diane Davis deploy the same term in their own recent discussions of middle classes.

While tensions are not confronting, however, they are certainly present, and they may be rising. Sylvia Tidey noticed that though Kupang's middle class do not always live in enclaved housing estates, they do

[9] Medan's crime-ridden Amblas and Binjai suburbs contrast with the elite Helvetia suburb. Jakarta has the impoverished Kampung Melayu or Ciliwung River slums on the one hand, and the gated communities in southern Jakarta on the other. I base these statements on my own (unpublished) calculations of an 'index of dissimilarity' for several cities using 2005 Susenas census data at the neighbourhood (*kelurahan*) level.

increasingly prefer them. These estates did not exist in the small town that preceded today's Kupang. Other authors noticed that while members of the middle classes did not talk about class, those of the lower classes did. When Nico Warouw visited the fishers kampungs on the outskirts of Cilegon and Pekalongan, he heard class talk all the time. People complained that they were excluded from politics by those who had better access to the state than they. They called the excluders 'elites', though in reality these were lower-level civil servants, people who would generally be classified lower-middle class. Among the excluded were factory workers (including skilled migrant labour), contract workers and informal workers. Wenty Marina Minza writes of the different life chances for Malay and Dayak youths of the 'lower middle class' versus those of mainly ethnic Chinese 'middle class' origin. The former fervently hope to become civil servants – any type will do – whereas the latter can afford to dream of developing their own unique potential as professionals. Janice Newberry, writing about a kampung in Yogyakarta, distinguished a self-conscious 'kampung' class of informal workers (many of them women) from an 'urban middle class' of white-collar workers.

There was a time when the communist party mobilized on these resentments – indeed this was happening in the very years the MIT team was still in Mojokuto. The Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia, or PKI) explicitly aimed to wean the poor off their dependency relations with patrons (Huizer 1974:100–1). In 1965/66 provincial towns around the country became the scene of bloody pogroms against communists. Members of provincial middle classes collaborated with the military, turning the massacres into the denouement of suddenly white-hot local class conflict (Kammen and McGregor 2012). Perhaps half a million people were killed, and many more detained for years without trial. Here the 'middle' was not asserting itself so much against Jakarta as against their own poor.

After the destruction of the communist party, memories of this episode were quickly encouraged to fade. Few of our researchers heard locals talk about them. Clientelistic attachments to middle-class patrons once more became the best option for the poor. Jan Newberry describes patron–client links between the kampung and urban middle classes that even extend to giving away their children in the desperate hope of improvement. She writes: '[H]ierarchical relationships are described in familial terms. The poorer, lower-status man is child to his senior officer (*anak buah* or literally, fruit child). Many poor people in my acquaintance hope to become the *anak buah* of a powerful man, and thus derive the benefits

(often economic) in exchange for loyalty (often political).' Anyone who does not belong to a clientelist network gets nothing. Wenty Marina Minza spoke with poor Dayaks in Pontianak who felt that they lacked the *koneksi* to make the most of the greater Dayak access to civil-service jobs that recent patronage democracy had created. One of them told her: 'My parents say that they can seek help from my father's friend. But his friend's position is not strong. The position will probably go to someone else with a stronger connection.'

Clientelist networks are marked by mutual obligations that can only be enforced by social sanctions. The trust that lies at the basis of these unequal relationships is often drawn from some family-like identity, which can be neighbourhood-based, religious or ethnic. The informality of state and market that is so characteristic of Middle Indonesia (as it is of Third World towns everywhere – see Datta 1990) makes clientelism pervasive. Rivalry between clientelist networks therefore often takes on communal dimensions. The most striking social differences within town are in fact ethnic. Others who examined provincial societies in Indonesia have noted that claims to local power seem to be based, not on possession of the means of production, as conventional analysts would expect, but on ethnicity and religion (Amal 1992; Asnan 2007; Schiller 1996). Several of our authors mention them, but Minza's chapter revolves around them. It seeks to explain why in Pontianak, as she put it, '[e]ntering the bureaucracy was apparently not a matter of acquiring the right qualifications but of being born into the right ethnic group'. In three of our five towns – Kupang, Ternate and Pontianak – people still recalled vividly an extensive episode of communal violence that took place in their town almost a decade earlier. These episodes were associated with the introduction of democracy, and the result has been to increase the salience of ethnic differences in these towns until the present day.

Much political-science literature about Indonesia revolves around the clientelistic relations that exist within government and between government and citizenry at the national level (Crouch 1979, 2009). Recent studies have demonstrated the prevalence of neo-patrimonial relations also at much more local levels (Van Klinken and Barker 2009). In the present study they turn out to be ubiquitous in provincial kampungs everywhere, particularly among poorer sections of the community. Most local-government and market institutions are 'socially embedded' in such patron–client networks. The networks are both integrative (by connecting people they build social capital) and oppressive (they often prevent citizens from claiming their rights). These interactions

produce the kind of business and politics for which provincial towns are best known – clientelistic, anti-liberal and, sometimes, intimidatory. 'Intermediate-class' operators, as we see them in the chapters by Nico Warouw, Wenty Marina Minza and Amalinda Savirani, mobilize, dispense patronage and threaten rivals with violence, all in an attempt to monopolize access to state contracts for their own network. The absence of formal legal sanctions to adjudicate these personalized deals creates considerable insecurity, as Minza's chapter makes particularly clear. Civil society, too, remains elusive, although Nico Warouw sees signs of it emerging as electoral democracy becomes more routine at the local level. Provincial societies are dominated, not by citizens who are free to speak truth to power, but by collusive, Gramscian blocs of bureaucrats, legislators, entrepreneurs, NGOs and journalists who *are* the state in their town.

There are some signs that the urban poor are increasingly looking for alternatives to a clientelistic arrangement. Nico Warouw describes local-neighbourhood actions to resist the patrons that they call 'elites' because they feel democracy offers them the chance for direct access to state resources. If inequalities continue to rise within Middle Indonesia – as experience elsewhere leads us to expect, at least until urbanization reaches maturity at around 70% – and if democracy holds, we may see clientelism give way once more to open class politics. This could make urban middle classes lean once more towards authoritarianism, as Rueschemeyer, Huber Stephens and Stephens (1992) predicted, and as had actually happened in Indonesia in 1965. The Bangkok unrest of 2010 is a recent Southeast Asian example of how this might happen.

State

This section returns to the question of the disproportionate political influence Middle Indonesia has on national issues such as democracy and the role of the state in the economy. Unlike middle classes in the conventional western imagination, Middle Indonesia's lower middle classes generally love the state. Nearly every indigenous university student Wenty Marina Minza interviewed in Pontianak told her they wanted to become a civil servant; not because the work fascinated them, but because it provided a steady income with which they could help mum and dad. Nearly every construction contractor Amalinda Savirani spoke to in Pekalongan told her they relied on state procurement for their living. The politics in

which these members of provincial middle classes engage are not about reducing state power over their lives, but about gaining more direct control over state resources. They are not about giving the market more room to breathe, but about increasing state powers to redistribute market profits to non-market players. This is most clearly the case in a town like Kupang, whose economy has little of interest to a middle class other than the state, as Sylvia Tidey shows. But it also holds for Pontianak, which is a trading entrepot for the resource-rich interior as well as a bureaucratized provincial capital. Minza demonstrates that its economy is segmented in such a way that the numerous and growing indigenous lower middle class is excluded from the middle and upper reaches of the market. The civil service is still the only place for them to go. As Kracauer's (1998 [orig. German 1929]) white-collar salariat of Berlin became for the first time in history the formative power in the public sphere in Weimar Germany, so Middle Indonesia's bureaucratic middle class shapes public life more than any other social force. The mutually constitutive role of the state and the provincial middle class is one of the most important emphases in the present set of studies.

If the economy had been largely formal and transparent, and if the state had been capable of acting coherently everywhere in its territory, then these lower-middle-class preferences would be a losing proposition. They would be a sign of their marginalization in a world in which states aim largely to facilitate global capitalism. But in Indonesia the provincial economy is overwhelmingly informal, and central state institutions are hardly capable of exercising their will without appeasing local bosses. The hidden strength of the provincial middle classes lies precisely in the opacity of the economy of their towns, caused by the informality of their intricate local arrangements and their impenetrability to central supervision. The fact that Middle Indonesia controls what Harriss-White for India called 'the economy of the 88 percent' creates political realities in Indonesia as well (Van Klinken 2009a). Provincial middle classes are not exactly rich in comparison with the national bourgeoisie, yet their demands for local autonomy have managed to keep the latter off balance. Their control of the local informal economy allows them to organize on their own turf. The local 'big men' Nico Warouw describes in Pekalongan and Cilegon – religious leaders and other community leaders – are essential to the state as political operators because they control territory to which the central state needs to have access too. The process of state formation that they represent resembles the 'strong man centered politics' that Patricio Abinales described in his history of Mindanao (2000:12), and

the street-level authority so essential to governance in Joshua Barker's (2009) Bandung.

Provincial assertiveness thus has its roots in the economy. Economic relations between subnational regions and national and global markets are complex. We have not studied them in detail – something we hope others will do. But what we have seen suggests that these relations are as politically charged as the administrative ones. On the one hand, private and public investment remains crucial to the economies of all provincial towns. But on the other, distrust of big capital is stronger among provincial business entrepreneurs than it seems to be in Jakarta. Provincial enterprises are smaller than those in the big cities. Entrepreneurs and local-government leaders know each other well. Together they organize to resist what they regard as threatening incursions from outside. Contrary to the suggestion created by the 'shared poverty' that Clifford Geertz detected in small-town Indonesia in the 1950s, these towns do have an economy to protect. Amalinda Savirani describes local officials who collude with construction contractors in town to circumvent new rules demanding transparent tendering. They fear these rules are a wedge in the door for an invasion of bigger builders from Jakarta. They have a shared interest in keeping outsiders out, and networks in the town are tight-knit enough to develop control over the process of awarding government contracts. Middle-class bureacrats and their class allies increase their rents by subverting institutions and regulations intended to improve market operation. Rents are thus earned through the political process, by building political alliances, rather than on the basis of quality of service and a perfect market.

At the same time, Middle Indonesia loves democracy, provided it comes with local autonomy. The present book offers only glimpses of the way Middle Indonesia practises democracy – with a gritty and often manipulative kind of energy and without nostalgia for centralized military rule. Other scholars are devoting a great deal of attention to it. Their work is too rich to summarize here, but among the most analytical is Ryan Tans' (2012) typology of local political actors. We recognize his depiction of local actors who combine some highly predatory behaviours with competitive mobilizational work that is sometimes good for democracy. Their skill at building coalitions sometimes brings previously excluded groups into politics. This helps them trump rivals who would have defeated them under a centralized authoritarian system. Particularly in those poorly governed, thinly populated areas that we here call Middle Indonesia, the central state is happy to appease rather than enforce rules.

Democracy has offered the local elites who populate our studies chances they would not have had under a more centralized regime. As noted above, this might change if the poor demand a bigger slice of the cake of provincial state rents than they do at present. But that possibility remains hypothetical at the moment.

Everyday Culture

Culturally, Middle Indonesia is a crossroads, a skein of mediatory processes. These processes are relatively unpolarized within the town, but they tend to be localist within the nation. The mediatory function of Middle Indonesia is at the heart of Joseph Errington's analysis of everyday language use in Kupang. Kupang Malay differs from both standard Indonesian and from local languages spoken in the rural province of East Nusa Tenggara. Faced with striking differences among these languages, everyone in town has to negotiate which combination of Kupang Malay and Indonesian they will use in any particular setting. The boundaries in these negotiations seem to be shifting towards Kupang Malay, as local status markers adapt to the town's growing confidence in its regional autonomy. 'Mixed use of the two languages serves to create a way of talking that is socially intermediary', he concludes. 'It allows speakers to enact middle-class identities grounded in both the city and the nation.' Mixed language use is 'mediating in an integrationist dynamic'. At the same time, these shifting patterns are the linguistic counterpart to rising localist sentiment. Visitors from the centre are regularly reminded of the popular injunction, mentioned at the start of this chapter, 'where the feet touch the ground, there the sky is held up' (*Di mana bumi dipijak di sana langit dijunjung*), meaning 'respect local values'. Kupang has no history of separatism, yet its distinctive language mediates a kind of regional identity. This, too, is an expression of Middle Indonesian assertiveness.

If there are class tensions in town, they do not extend to culture wars. At least at first sight, internal differences seem minimal. But much depends on the vantage point of the analyst, and some observers have seen striking differences. In the eyes of the town's better-off denizens, integrative, diffusive processes of modernization appear to be the most powerful. Noorhaidi Hasan describes established provincial middle classes who introduce cosmopolitan religious ideas to the town from the big cities that they so frequently visit. The talk they stimulate in public is an optimistic and universalizing one of democratic, consumerist Islamic

piety. The top layer of the provincial society enjoys almost the same lifestyle as in Jakarta or Hong Kong. To the wealthiest members of the provincial middle class – successful entrepreneurs, education professionals, religious leaders and senior officials – the town feels not that much different from the big city. Their culture sets the tone for the whole town in terms of formal dress codes, architectural taste, publicly funded entertainment or religious events. They have ensured that their towns have mediated the hegemonic metropolitan cultures and practices well, facilitated by ever-tighter political, economic and infrastructural integration throughout the twentieth century. The education system they run is among the most powerful means at their disposal. Noorhaidi Hasan describes the Islamic members of provincial middle classes whom he met as 'active negotiators between the global and the local, and between the cosmopolitan centre and the hinterland'. As a result, he writes, 'Indonesian Islam has experienced a process of gentrification, favouring global high-technology and consumerist Islamic appetites'. This way lies civility. Contrary to the arguments of some that globalization makes people withdraw defensively into local cultures (Juergensmeyer 2005), Noorhaidi finds the global flows smoothly into the provincial and is welcomed there. It has to be said that opposition from the more traditional provincial conservatism remains somewhat understudied in this account, as is the dark side of the hegemony the town's establishment exercises over the permissible public discourse. Half of Kebumen town is classified as 'poor', yet the public discourse is not one of dissatisfaction. Nevertheless, the contribution that the town makes to the diffusion of global values remains an important argument of this book, even if that contribution is not without limits.

Cornelis Lay, by contrast, provides a view from below. His reminiscences of growing up in a lower-class kampung in Kupang in the 1970s bring to light a culture at odds with that of the town's middle class. *Contra* the MIT team in the 1950s, and *contra* those who source today's provincial localism to the ill-educated poor, kampung values were not 'traditional'. They were proletarian. The poor enjoyed a loud and somewhat irreverent neighbourly solidarity that expected little from the wider world. Not resigned involution, but strong aspirations for upward mobility circulated there. Meanwhile the culture of personal piety, restraint and hygiene practised in the homes of the 'bosses' in town – nearly all civil servants – was to Kupang's poor a source of wonderment. The days when they could vent that irreverence in loud protests against 'bureaucratic capitalists' (*kapitalis birokrat*, or *kabir*) had passed shortly before, amidst the brutal

anticommunist purges of the mid-1960s, which Connie Lay still remembers vaguely. By the 1970s, as in Jan Newberry's account of the kampung poor in today's Yogyakarta, the route to upward social mobility lay in approaching the bosses for patronage. The basis was there in the town's cross-class bonds of ethnic community, as well as in a paternalistic faith in progress through hard work that glowed in the bossoms of the bosses. This is how Cornelis Lay got his scholarship to the university in Java. Not everyone was so lucky. Repeated disappointment creates real resentment. The poor still believe fervently that education offers them a way up, but the usual meritocratic principles do not work well (see the chapter by Wenty Marina Minza). Today, the urban poor know democracy has not yet brought equality to them. That awareness of their rights makes them part of a wave of rising expectations washing the globe from Burma to Morocco.

Further Research

As the title of this book indicates, Middle Indonesia is not a set of conclusions but a research programme or, more accurately, another step forward in an effort that scholars have now been pursuing for some time. This section highlights three broad suggestions for pushing research into Indonesia's middle classes forward.

The first is to learn more from the 'spatial turn' in the social sciences in recent years. The premise of that turn can be expressed very simply as follows: '[W]*here* things happen is critical to knowing *how* and *why* they happen' (Warf and Arias 2008:1). Many social processes of practical importance in a large country such as Indonesia are spatially selective. Industrialization creates employment near large cities (and a few towns like Cilegon), but rural peasants dispossessed by advancing cash crops are likely to become a permanent 'surplus population' (Li 2009). Religious conservatism is more mobilizable in provincial towns than in villages or large cities. In Indonesia's complex political geography, Jakarta Golkar apparatchiks are slowly gaining ground over local party 'mafias' in densely settled coastal areas, but not in thinly populated, poorly governed upland areas (Tans 2012). In short, whether focused on the impact of globalization or 'islamo-fascism', governance or electoral politics, the most fruitful research agendas will include spatial comparisons. Provincial towns play important roles in these extended spaces.

The second is to broaden research on class beyond the present, predominantly cultural, interests (such as questions about glocalization and

hybridity) to include material interests, antagonism and exploitation. In Indonesia, class in this sense has not been a focus for many years (Farid 2005). Many well-known factors have led to a decline in such studies over the last two decades: the Cold War has ended; class tensions seem to be muted everywhere, except in Latin America; liberalization has caused the prestige of central states that were once the object of class struggles to decline; identity struggles appear to assume greater prominence the closer the anthropologist approaches a local arena. Yet the emotions on the streets of crisis-hit southern European cities are class emotions, harbingers of more if the global economy and, with it, the capitalist narrative continue to falter. Class antagonisms were overt in the Red versus Yellow battles that paralysed Bangkok in 2010, and they underlie the Chinese Communist Party's fears about explosive urban–rural inequalities. The present book has begun to explore the subtle interplay of dependence and antagonism, of identity and class, of clientship and citizenship, that can be seen in the everyday relations in provincial towns where these concern access to the resources of the local state.

The third broad suggestion is to do more with networks, no longer merely as a metaphor, but also as a complex map of actual relationships. Networks have always been prominent in the lexicon of human geographers. They are now also central to the spatial turn pioneered by social scientists such as Bruno Latour, David Harvey, Doreen Massey and Manuel Castells. They offer a way of resolving the contradictory observations about diffusion and an assertive middle by introducing key notions such as mediation and brokerage. On the one hand, the network idiom is appropriate for the patron–client ties that characterize so much social interaction within the town, as well as for the politics of decentralization that have boosted Middle Indonesia's influence. Networks emphasize interconnectivity, they build social capital, and this is reflected in much of the positive work of diffusion that we have observed in Middle Indonesia. On the other hand, just as important (though less often remarked) is the fact that networks of antagonism also exist. Brokerage can be extortionary under certain circumstances – think of the lucrative chokepoints along the Rhine that made Germany's robber barons rich. Gatekeeping, even sabotage, are also brokerage functions. The regional revolts of 1957 can be seen as Middle Indonesian brokers ganging up on the centre. 'Urban bias' occurs when towns grow fat at the expense of the countryside – they are acting like brokers who charge commission. Such behaviour is typical of provincial towns in Indonesia (G. Jones 1988:150), and, to a much greater extent, of the cities of sub-Saharan Africa (Bates 2008; Kitching 1980).

These more complex aspects of network theory could help us vizualize the simultaneous existence in town of uneasy class tensions between patrons and clients on the one hand, and communal rivalries between multiple middle-class patrons on the other. The political economy of gatekeeping games played by members of provincial middle-class 'elites' is not the simple binary one of capitalists and workers, but the more complex one of control over sources of rents. These games can possibly be described either in terms of 'non-polar' classes or of network brokerage.

Summing Up

Our Middle Indonesian studies are producing a grounded explanation for many features of Indonesian social and political life once attributed vaguely to an abstract Indonesian culture. Among them are the resurgence in Islamic piety and of ethnic identities; the tradition of *gotong royong* kampung solidarity; and a messy interplay of democracy, corruption and anti-market sentiments. These beliefs and practices turn out to be most visible in particular spaces, namely provincial towns, while their agents are members of particular social classes, namely provincial (lower) middle classes. That is what Middle Indonesia is about – the power of the middle to impress itself on the whole. The idea is that we can explain higher-level processes (national democratization, anti-market sentiment, religion, conservative types of solidarity) by means of lower-level processes.[10]

A focus on Middle Indonesia offers a new interpretation of the massive growth in the number of people who can afford more than the absolute basics in life. The increase in purchasing power as well as in political influence has been rapid particularly among an overwhelmingly *lower* middle class. They resemble less the comfortable bourgeoisie of nineteenth-century Europe than an anxious and conservative petit bourgeoisie. Historically this politically active group has been created by the state – they are teachers, government clerks, police officers and their private business partners. In recent times the proportion coming from the private sector has grown – though probably less so in provincial towns than in the big cities. The prosperity even of those in the private sector also depends on connections with the state through government contracts and subsidies. Informality and social embeddedness characterize

[10] This is a basic principle in process theory (Stinchcombe 1991).

all state and market institutions at this provincial, lower-middle-class level. Perhaps it is true that people's behaviour there constitutes the consumer revolution that excites the ADB, but it is not matched with a revolution in the economic productivity to underpin it. The threatening 'middle-income trap'[11] has its home in Middle Indonesia too.

Democracy is important to this group because it promises them greater access to the resources of the state and the state-managed market. This distinguishes them from the national bourgeoisie who already had all they wanted under the authoritarian New Order. In 1998 many observers feared the new democracy might have been merely the unintended consequence of an intra-elite spat, to be withdrawn once elite unity was restored. The fact that today Indonesia is a consolidated democracy is due as much to those millions in Middle Indonesia who continue to make it work as to a bourgeoisie who initiated it. That said, the quality of democracy also bears the imprint of Middle Indonesia's peculiarly clientelistic and informalized class tensions. Scholars of provincial politics elsewhere in Southeast Asia have made similar discoveries. Daniel Arghiros (2001:273) summed up Thai provincial democracy by naming 'just two phenomena: vote buying and political clientelism' (see also McVey 2000; Ockey 2004). The 'gangsters' in an edited volume entitled *Gangsters, democracy, and the state in Southeast Asia* were mainly provincial operators (Trocki 1998). We have called what they do 'patronage democracy' (Van Klinken 2009b).

Decentralization, not human rights or justice for the poor, was for this bureaucratic middle class the central reform. Indeed, whenever the poor do organize today, the charge of communism is quickly heard from the mouths of these same provincial democrats, with all its echoes of the death of democracy in 1965. The analysis of Rueschemeyer, Huber Stephens and Stephens suggests that the single most important explanation for the deficiencies in Indonesia's democratization is the minimal role that the poor have played in the post-1998 reforms.

In short, Middle Indonesia on the whole resists rather than welcomes globalized, open markets (while of course enjoying the consumer goods on sale). The picture here is not wholly unambiguous, as seen for example in the globalized provincial-elite lifestyles in Noorhaidi Hasan's chapter, but it is strong enough to be a core argument of the book. In the political arena, Middle Indonesia enjoys democracy but uses its political skills and

[11] Changyong Rhee, 'Indonesia risks falling into the middle-income trap', *The Jakarta Globe,* 27 March 2012.

clientelistic networks to make the system work to its own advantage, which is not necessarily that of either the national elites or the poor.

We make no predictions about the future of Middle Indonesia. Those who think it represents a rearguard conservatism, bound eventually to wither under the onslaught of global capital, may be right, as may those who think Middle Indonesia represents the core of an admittedly flawed, yet ultimately hopeful, resistance to that same global capital. As Ben White points out here, this question was already raised by the originator of the 'intermediate-class' concept, Michal Kalecki, in the 1970s, and it remains an open one. But we do claim that the social and geographical rootedness of Middle Indonesia makes it an instructive and durable object of study.

PART ONE

CLASS

BETTING ON THE MIDDLE? MIDDLETOWN, MOJOKUTO AND 'MIDDLE INDONESIA'

Ben White

Intermediate Towns and Intermediate Classes

As explained in the introduction, the various chapters in this book are based on a research project that set out to study 'intermediate classes' in Indonesia's 'intermediate towns'. The project's name 'Middle Indonesia' echoes the decision of Clifford Geertz and his colleagues in the MIT Indonesia research project, almost 60 years ago, to call the middle-sized town in and around which their research was located 'Mojokuto', which means in Javanese literally 'middle town'. This in turn was a clear reference to the well-known studies in the 1920s and 1930s by Robert and Helen Lynd and their research team of Muncie, Indiana, a middle-sized town in the United States that they called 'Middletown'. These 'middle town' studies attracted much attention and generated much debate. The second key aspect of our research project – 'intermediate classes' in these 'middle towns' – has its roots in a pioneering essay by the Polish economist Michał Kalecki (Kalecki 1972b) on intermediate classes and intermediate regimes, originally written in the 1960s and based on his observations in the 1950s in India, Egypt and particularly Indonesia, and a more recent debate on the significance, survival and developmental role of intermediate classes in India (Harriss-White 2003).

This short chapter reflects on some of the antecedents and implications of this focus on the 'intermediate'. What are the implications of this attention to the economic, social and political 'middle'? What do we in fact study when we study intermediate towns? Do we think that we can find in them a microcosm of the larger society? Should we be (and have we been) studying these towns, or have we rather been studying other things *in* these towns – in other words, is 'middle Indonesia' the object, or the locus of our study? And what are the implications of a focus on the 'intermediate' social classes in these 'middle' towns, rather than their elites, their working classes or the destitute? These questions are in fact part of a broader debate in the social sciences on the advantages and

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disadvantages of a focus on the 'middle' rather than the upper and lower 'extremes' of societies.

In the social sciences there is a long-standing tension between two traditions of studying social processes and social change. One sees the 'soul' of a society or community, and the source of its dynamics, in its intermediate, modal or 'middle' components, while the other locates these more in the extreme 'upper' and 'lower' economic or social groups or classes (wealthy/poor, elite/mass) and especially the dynamics of their relationships with each other. The first is associated with the North American sociological tradition, functionalism and neo-populism, while the latter is more associated with political economy, class analysis and Marxism.

The next three sections will further explore this broader tension by looking at two key areas of debate. First, we will touch briefly on the debates between two main traditions in the study of agrarian change, originating in continental Europe but also reflected in Indonesian agrarian studies. Then we focus in greater detail on the conceptual divide between two landmark studies of 'middle town' society in the United States, the 'Middletown' and 'Yankee City' studies. We then turn to Indonesia and the 'Mojokuto' studies of the early 1950s, returning finally to some reflections on our own 'middle Indonesia' studies.

Marxists and Neo-Populists

In rural studies the tensions mentioned above are manifested most clearly in the debates between the Leninist and Chayanovian traditions of research on agrarian change in the Russian and northern European countryside. These have continued in studies of Asian, African and Latin American peasantries in process of 'modernization'. What was this all about? Lenin wrote from exile in Siberia in 1896–1899, using statistical data sent from Moscow by his wife. Chayanov was professor of agricultural economics in the more comfortable surroundings of the Timiryazev Academy in Moscow, and wrote mainly in the 1920s. Both based their work on similar sets of pre-Bolshevik local-government (*zemstvo*) statistics on farm size and organization. But they produced diametrically opposing visions of Russian peasant society.

Lenin recognized the existence of a 'middle' group of peasant family farms (which he estimated at about 40% of all farms), but focused his analysis on the two groups on either side of them. These were the capitalist-farmer minority ('probably less than one-fifth' of all households, but

together representing a large part of the rural economy) and their relationship with the landless and near-landless (the 'lower 50%') who provided them with wage labour. He saw the dynamic of change in the relationship between these two extremes. The 'cumulation of advantages and disadvantages' resulted in the emergence of these two groups and produced the 'differentiation of the peasantry'. It was these groups, rather than the 'labour farms' in the middle, which provided the rural home-market for both the agricultural and the industrial products of emerging Russian capitalism. Their relationship was therefore an essential building block in his larger argument that capitalism was already developing in Russia. In Lenin's model of class differentiation, the penetration of a commodity economy 'develops the extreme groups at the expense of the middle peasantry'. This process of 'depeasantization' creates 'new types of rural inhabitants', the well-to-do, labour-hiring farmers at one extreme and the landless (or, more often, near-landless) rural proletariat at the other:

> Numerically, the peasant bourgeoisie constitute a small minority of the peasantry, probably not more than one-fifth of the total number of households.…But as to their weight in the sum-total of peasant farming, in the total quantity of means of production belonging to the peasantry, in the total amount of produce raised by the peasantry, the peasant bourgeoisie are undoubtedly predominant. They are the masters of the contemporary countryside.
>
> The most typical representative [of the rural proletariat]…is the allotment-holding farm labourer, day labourer, unskilled labourer, building worker or other allotment-holding worker. Insignificant farming on a patch of land, with the farm in a state of utter ruin… inability to exist without the sale of labour power…and extremely low standard of living – such are the distinguishing features of this type. One must assign not less than half of the total peasant households…to membership of the rural proletariat. (Lenin 1960 [1899]:177–8.)

Chayanov, in contrast, focused on the 80% of all households that *were* 'family farms', because he was concerned to show that family farming could be an efficient and viable part of a 'modern' agrarian commodity economy. He acknowledged the existence of emerging capitalist farming on the 'wage labour farms' (which he estimated at around 10% of all farms) and also of the emerging landless proletariat, but ignored them for his purpose, which was to develop a model of the 'labour farm', the peasant family farm:

> Simple, everyday observation of life in the countryside shows us elements of 'capitalist exploitation'. We suppose that, on the one hand,

> proletarianization of the countryside and, on the other, a certain development of capitalist production forms undoubtedly take place there…[however], as we are concerned with the labour farm the themes we have touched on, despite their exceptionally intense and topical general economic interest, are quite to one side. (Chayanov 1966 [1925]:256–7.)

In Indonesian studies, from the late colonial period to the present, there has been a similar tension between two opposing visions of Indonesian rural society. One, dominant among policy makers, academics and urban elites, has promoted the image of rural society – especially, but not only, in Java – as being made up of egalitarian and homogeneous and classless communities of 'peasants' or small farmers, practicing some ill-defined form of 'subsistence farming' and to greater or lesser degree insulated from the cash economy. The other underlines the dependence of most rural Indonesians on the cash economy, at least from the early twentieth century, and the importance of processes of social differentiation, pointing to the emergence of agrarian classes, based primarily on access to land, including a substantial landless class in many regions (Hüsken and White 1989:237–47).

An example of the first approach during the late colonial and early independence period is Sukarno's *marhaenisme*. It was inspired by Sukarno's chance meeting on a stroll near Cigelereng with Marhaen, the Sundanese 'chicken-flea peasant' (*tani sieur*) who owned and operated a small farm but did not employ workers and was poor, but not a member of the proletariat (Soekarno 1975 [1930]:96–7). Another well-known example is Geertz's influential ideas on 'agricultural involution' and 'shared poverty' in rural Java, perhaps the only lasting theoretical contribution to Indonesian agrarian studies made by a foreign scholar in this period (Geertz 1963a). The second approach is reflected in the studies on land concentration, tenancy relations and the chronic indebtedness of small peasants, tenants and landless workers in West Java by Anwas Adiwilaga (1954a, 1954b) and Ten Dam (1966), and the Indonesian Peasant Front's studies of numerous villages in different parts of Indonesia (Slamet-Velsink 1988). Studies of Indonesia's 'green revolution' and its impact on rural societies in the 1970s and 1980s (summarized in B. White 2005) show a similar tension between the two approaches.

The 'Middletown' Studies

In urban studies we can see a parallel kind of discussion in the debates on urban class and classlessness in the first half of the twentieth century, this

time originating in small-town studies conducted in the United States; in particular, we are concerned with Robert and Helen Lynd's Middletown studies of the 1920s and 1930s in Muncie, Indiana (Lynd and Lynd 1929, 1937) and, some years after that, Lloyd Warner and Paul Lunt's 'Yankee City' studies (Warner and Lunt 1941). As already mentioned, the decision of Geertz and his colleagues in the MIT Indonesia project to call their research base 'Mojokuto' is a nod to the Lynds.

Robert and Helen Lynd had no training in the social sciences when they went to Muncie in 1924. In fact, they had been assigned the task of studying the 'spiritual life' of this small Midwestern town for their employers, the Institute of Social and Religious Research, funded by the prominent Baptist John D. Rockefeller Jr. (Gilkesen Jr. 1995). Just like Geertz, whose task in the Mojokuto team was to study Javanese religion, but who ended up writing about all kinds of other topics, the Lynds also deviated from their terms of reference. They wrote only marginally on religion, and mainly about class cleavages in 'Middletown', and indeed, when the focus of their work became clear, they almost could not get their first book published. This is especially interesting because they had gone to Muncie in the sure expectation of finding cultural and social homogeneity, but were converted to a class analysis perspective by what they found there.

In fact, the Lynds' original study was a catalogue of methodological omissions in the search for cultural homogeneity. The town itself was chosen because of its ethnically relatively homogeneous population, although they knew that 'such a population is unusual in an American industrial city' (Lynd and Lynd 1929:9). It had 'a small Negro and foreign-born population'; in the 1920s about 6% of Muncie's population were black, but they were purposely excluded from the survey and only rarely appear in the book. In their second book the Lynds admitted that the racial line dividing Muncie's black minority from its majority white population was in fact 'the deepest and most blindly followed line of division in the community....They are the most marginal population in Middletown' (Lynd and Lynd 1937:463, 465; see also Bahr, Pearson and Elder 2007). Similarly, the town's small Jewish minority appear only three times in 512 pages of the two Middletown books, even though one of these references mentions casually that the Jews 'had come to dominate the retail life of the city' (Lynd and Lynd 1929:484) and another that the Ku Klux Klan, coming into Middletown 'like a tornado' a few years previously, had chosen the town's Catholics, blacks and Jews as its targets (Lynd and Lynd 1929:482–3).

Finally, Muncie's four richest families – the four Ball brothers, who dominated the entire economy and social, cultural and political life of

Muncie – were also purposely excluded from the survey. It was only after the second study of Muncie in 1935 that the authors included a whole chapter on what they called 'the X family: a pattern of business-class control'. Some of their informants showed their awareness of the dominance of this family in no uncertain terms, as in this man's comment (in which 'X' refers to the Ball family):

> If I–m out of work I go to the X plant; if I need money I go to the X bank, and if they don't like me I don't get it; my children go to the X college; when I get sick I go to the X hospital; I buy a building lot or a house in an X subdivision; my wife goes downtown to buy clothes at the X department store; if my dog strays away he is put in the X pound; I buy X milk; I drink X beer, vote for X political parties, and get help from X charities; my boy goes to the X YMCA and my girl to their YWCA; I listen to the word of God in X-subsidised churches; if I–m a Mason I go to the X Masonic temple; I read the news from the X morning newspaper; and, if I am rich enough, I travel via the X airport. (Lynd and Lynd 1937:74.)

Surprisingly, then, the Lynds, although having set out to look for 'the middle' and, as we have seen, omitting from their study significant minorities at either extreme of the class divide, emerged from their study to promote a strident critique of class stratification in the United States. They argued in both the Middletown books and other publications for the next 30 years that American society was based on unacceptable class divisions.

In their first book they had begun with a simplistic two-class model, declaring that the 'division into working class and business class' constituted the 'outstanding cleavage' in Muncie (and, by extension, the rest of urban industrial America) (Gilkesen Jr. 1995:334). This division was essentially between the 71% of the workforce who 'address their activities in getting their living primarily to *things*, utilizing material tools in the making of things and the performance of services', and the remaining 29% who 'address their activities predominantly to *people* in the selling or promotion of things, services, and ideas' (Lynd and Lynd 1929:22–24). This simple distinction (basically between 'producers' and 'non-producers'), as later critics noted, failed to allow for the existence of either a 'middle class' (whether defined as professionals or white-collar workers) or an 'upper class'. Instead, the Lynds lumped together salaried employees, the self-employed, corner grocers and glass manufacturers in the business class (Gilkesen Jr. 1995:334).

The Lynds' first book, *Middletown: A study in contemporary American culture,* became an unexpected best-seller, going through six printings in its first year. This was one reason behind their decision to go back to

Muncie with a new team in 1935, as Muncie emerged from the Great Depression. In their new study, *Middletown in transition: A study in cultural conflicts*, the Lynds elaborated their class model into what they called a 'nascent class system' consisting of six classes. This book played an important part in giving class analysis more popular currency in the United States. Basically, the old 'business-class' and 'working-class' categories were each divided into three discrete strata. These were:

1. 'a small, self-conscious upper class'
2. the business class: 'established smaller manufacturers, merchants, and professional folk' and better-paid salaried employees
3. 'small white-collar folk' (less economically secure)
4. a small 'aristocracy of local labour'
5. the 'masses of semiskilled and unskilled workers', and
6. irregularly employed 'poor whites' recently migrated from Appalachia (Lynd and Lynd 1937:458–60).

In 1937, in response to the popularity of the Middletown studies, the photographer Margaret Bourke-White was commissioned by *Life* magazine to produce a picture essay on Muncie entitled 'Muncie Ind. is the great U.S. "Middletown"'.[1] To the surprise of many, she followed the Lynds' perspective and produced images that starkly reflected class cleavage:

> One showed Muncie's 'most exclusive set' dressed in pink coats riding to hounds at William Ball's farm, while another showed a former Ball steel and iron worker who had been forced to go on the dole after exhausting his indemnity from an industrial accident in which he lost a leg. Two other photos contrasted William Ball's opulent living room with the one-room clapboard shack in 'Shedtown' in which a desperately poor couple from Kentucky raised chickens 'fer eatin'. (Gilkesen Jr. 1995:336.)

Residents of Muncie also read the book and the *Life* magazine article, and did not like either of them. As one said of Bourke-White's photos: 'They show the upper crust and the lower (soaked) crust, but left out the middle filling, which is the most important part of any community' (cited in Gilkesen Jr. 1995:344, note 32).

To some, then, Bourke-White's photos and the Lynds' analysis that had inspired them seemed to have been flawed by their highlighting of Middletown's extremes of wealth and poverty, to the exclusion of its 'middle'.

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[1] 'Muncie Ind. is the great U.S. "Middletown"', *Life* 2 (May 1937):15–26.

Lloyd Warner's 'Yankee City'

The Middletown studies were more widely read, but had less influence in shaping conceptions of urban social structure in the United States than W. Lloyd Warner's research in Newbury, Massachusetts between 1930 and 1934. Warner's research, published in the four 'Yankee City' volumes between 1941 and 1947, put forward a completely different picture.

The Yankee City studies were conducted by Harvard University's Committee of Industrial Psychology. Warner and his team had, like the Lynds, looked for an 'intermediate town' to meet their requirements, this time with the following criteria: a population of less than 20,000; a community 'sufficiently autonomous to have a separate life of its own, not a mere satellite of the metropolitan area of a large city', with on the one hand a population 'predominantly old American' and with an 'uninterrupted tradition back of it', but on the other hand a number of 'old ethnic groups like the Irish and Jews and newer ones like the Greeks and Italians'; and 'near enough to Cambridge so that the research men could go back and forth without difficulty or loss of time' (Warner and Lunt 1941:38–9). 'Old American' here means not 'native' American, but those 'Yankees' who gave the city its pseudonym: 'the stock which is usually thought of as the core of modern America – the group which normally assimilates the other ethnic groups' (Warner and Lunt 1941: 38–9).

Newburyport was a harbour town at the mouth of a large river. Dating from the early seventeenth century, it had a population of 17,000 and about one quarter of its labour force worked in the town's various shoe factories. It was also an important silverware manufacturing centre. It therefore had, like Middletown, a substantial working class. When surveyed in 1933, 46% of the workforce were 'semi-skilled' (mainly factory) workers, and 19% were unemployed (Warner and Lunt 1941:77–8).

Warner and his team of 'fieldmen' (sometimes as many as fifteen) used aerial photography to map the city's neighbourhoods, conducted hundreds of interviews, and constructed a 'social personality card' for almost all of Newburyport's 17,000 inhabitants, excluding only infants (Warner and Lunt 1941:70). Out of these materials Warner claimed to have worked out empirically the existence of six 'stratified social classes' in Newburyport. The notion of economic class was abandoned, and class defined rather vaguely as 'orders of people who are believed to be, and are accordingly ranked by the members of the community, in socially superior and socially inferior positions' (Warner and Lunt 1941:82). No more detailed definition of the concept than this was given in the chapters on concepts and

methods. Critics complained about the vagueness of the procedures followed to arrive at this stratification, and the criteria for distinguishing the 'upper upper', 'lower upper', 'upper middle', 'lower middle', 'upper lower' and 'lower lower' classes are indeed rather unclear. Later they were systematized and published as the methods of 'Evaluated Participation' and the 'Index of Status Characteristics' (Gilkesen Jr. 1995:340).

According to Warner this social class system, however unclearly defined, determined 'the allocation of pleasant and unpleasant tasks among its members as well as the division of spoils' (Warner and Lunt 1941:24). This interpretation represented a shift away from more 'economic' to more 'social' conceptions of class, which 'deflected interest from production, what one did for a living and how much one earned, to social interaction and consumption, whom one associated with and how one spent one's money'. This notion of stratification played down the divisive connotations of social inequality, viewing it in functionalist terms as both an inevitable by-product of a complex division of labour and as a source of integration rather than division and conflict (Gilkesen Jr. 1995:339).

C. Wright Mills, in a devastating critique of the Yankee City project's first volume, argued that Warner had jumbled up the three notions of (economic) class, (social) status and power, 'absorbing these three analytically separable dimensions into the one sponge word "class"', also failing to distinguish 'class' and 'class-awareness', and relying mainly on observations of 'status-awareness': 'It is a double confusion: first, of class with status; and second, of class with status-awareness' (Mills 1942:264–5). Most of the empirical chapters, he claimed, contained 'a maximum of flat, tallying busywork with a minimum of sociological imagination… embarrassingly naked as far as theoretical understanding and explanation are concerned' (Mills 1942:271). Not surprisingly, Mills came down firmly on the side of the Lynds:

> Operating with a far less elaborate theory (and no doubt without the 17,000 cards, the dictaphones, and the airplane used by Warner) the Lynds succeeded in presenting a far superior picture of the composition and mechanics of a modern community. The *Middletown* books can't be dodged. (Mills 1942:269.)

Warner's ideas, however, resonated better with the American-educated public's belief that their society was composed of social rather than economic classes, and were much more influential than those of the Lynds among the post-war generation of social scientists.

Mojokuto: Dodging Class

A few years later, Geertz's writings on Mojokuto (then spelled Modjokuto) reflected a model of social grouping much more akin to Lloyd Warner's Yankee City than to the Lynds' Middletown. Geertz and his colleagues in the MIT Indonesia project were originally to do their research together with young staff of Yogyakarta's Gadjah Mada University in the hill town of Wonosobo. But for reasons that are still not entirely clear they abandoned this idea, left their Indonesian counterparts behind in Yogyakarta and settled on the East Javanese market and sub-district town of Pare as their research base. Accounts of this breakdown are divergent. Geertz laid the blame for the breakdown on the Indonesian professors, who apparently insisted that the American and Indonesian students' fieldwork be conducted from the comfort of an old Dutch resort hotel; local officials would summon people from the surrounding countryside to the hotel to be interviewed in groups, in an 'extraordinary reincarnation of the pith-helmet procedures of colonial ethnology' (Geertz 1995:105). But he also recalls that at the time, 'an armed gang of leftist rebels controlled much of the countryside' around Wonosobo (Geertz 1995:106), which helps to explain the Gadjah Mada professors' reluctance to let their young American guests loose there.

The Middletown studies were certainly one of the influences leading Clifford Geertz and his colleagues to call Pare 'Mojokuto' ('middle town') in their publications. It would be interesting to know whose idea this was, and precisely when it was agreed upon by the team, but that would require some work in the Mojokuto project archives. Geertz in later life suggested both that this had not been his idea, and that he did not much like it: '"Mojokuto" means "Middletown", a conceit I was dubious of then and have grown no fonder of since' (Geertz 2000:14).

Geertz's work on both urban and rural Indonesia, in the various books that emerged from the Mojokuto project in the 1960s, shows a pronounced tendency to avoid discussion of major social divides by focusing on the middle and on non-class distinctions. There has been extended critique of this aspect of his work on rural Java, with just about all the main arguments in *Agricultural involution* having been proved wrong by subsequent empirical research. Geertz's chronic blindness to class relations and divisions in Javanese society is a good example of what Wertheim in his later years called the 'sociologists' blind spots', or the 'sociology of ignorance' (Wertheim 1984). As Wertheim remarked, Geertz's vision of rural Javanese society mirrored the blindness of colonial and post-colonial elites, whose idea of the harmonious and homogeneous village community was

derived from, and promoted by, the village elite themselves (Wertheim 1975:177–214). There is certainly a striking lack of fit between Geertz's accounts of Javanese homogeneous rural and small-town culture and the many violent, class-based political conflicts in the region both before and after his fieldwork. His general claims in *Agricultural involution* – a book based not on fieldwork but on secondary data – that Javanese society consisted not of 'haves' and 'have nots' but only of *cukupans* and *kekurangans* ('just enoughs' and 'not quite enoughs'; see Geertz 1963a:97), certainly jars oddly with the evidence in his own field study of Mojokuto, which notes landlord households owning up to 20 hectares of irrigated rice fields, about 40 times the average holding (Geertz 1965:21).

There has been less critique of Geertz's work on urban Mojokuto, the place where most of his own field research was concentrated. In the less widely read books *Peddlers and princes* (1963b) and *The social history of an Indonesian town* (1965) one can find many bold statements about the formless, confused state of Mojokuto's social organization, which Geertz (1965:121) describes as 'a social jumble': [Mojokuto's social organization is] 'a social composite, an only partially organized coincidence of separate social structures, the most important of which are the government bureaucracy, the market network, and a somewhat revised version of the village system' (Geertz 1965:27).

Geertz does not talk of social classes at all. Instead, he claimed to have identified the 'ten concrete groups which, in seeming disarray, compose it'. Geertz aligns these groups along a number of 'second order distinctions': 'Javanist (*priyayi, abangan*) vs. Islamic (*santri*)'; 'politically responsive (*insaf*) vs. politically unresponsive (*masa bodoa* [sic])'; 'modern (*modèren*) vs. traditional (*kuna* or *kolot*)'; and 'elite (*pemimpin*) vs. mass (*rakyat*)' (Geertz 1965:129–33). This latter distinction 'between the movers and shakers and the moved and shaken on the sub-district level' was 'neither absolute nor absolutely systematic: but it was quite clear' (Geertz 1965:132). Mojokuto's Chinese business and trading minority (like the Jews in the Lynds' Middletown) are left out of this framework.

None of these social distinctions, of course, are necessarily incompatible with distinctions based on economic class, but Geertz, like Lloyd Warner, seems not to have made any attempt to look for these. In all societies, class distinctions intersect with other axes of distinction and identity, but this does not mean we can ignore their existence. You don't find classes unless you look for them, asking such basic questions as 'who owns what, who does what, who gets what, what do they do with it, and what do they do to each other?'.

Where concrete information is given on these down-to-earth matters, the signs of some clear economic distinctions and relationships are quite evident. For example, in the kampung residential pattern 'the whole block is owned by one or two people', usually living in the stone houses facing the street. Behind them are crowded bamboo houses, often owned by their occupants but sometimes rented. Only 11% of Mojokuto residents owned both house and land, 49% owned their house but rented the land it was built on, and 40% owned neither house nor land (Geertz 1965:129–33).

What causes sociological blindness? Here we should look not only to the author's personal politics, but also to the limitations of their analytical framework. In general, Geertz had avoided the trend in the 1970s to place issues of class, power and history more centrally in anthropology, and had stuck to a vision of cultures as systems of locally shared symbols (and associated practices). This blinded him to questions of social differentiation, social conflict, and contestations (B. White 2007:1201).

'Middle Indonesia'

> 'The to-ing and fro-ing of the class discourse in Indonesia exemplifies the close connection between the social sciences and power' (Farid 2005:189).

What, then, about our approach to the study of 'Middle Indonesia'? First, it should be clear that we have not been studying 'Middle Indonesian' towns as microcosms of anything. Here, unusually, I agree with Geertz:

> The notion that one can find the essence of national societies, civilizations, great religions, or whatever summed up and simplified in so-called 'typical' small towns and villages, is palpable nonsense. What one finds in small towns and villages is (alas) small-town or village life. (Geertz 1973:22–3.)

What we have been doing, actually, is to study certain issues and social processes *in* intermediate towns. Geertz again: 'The locus of study is not the object of study. Anthropologists don't study villages (tribes, towns, neighbourhoods…); they study *in* villages' (Geertz 1973:22–3).

The various studies on 'intermediate classes' referred to above have often been quite unclear and contradictory about what exactly they mean by 'intermediate classes'. Kalecki referred to 'the lower-middle class and rich peasantry' (Kalecki 1972b:162), distinguishing them from 'rural and urban paupers' on the one hand and from 'the upper-middle classes allied with foreign capital and the feudal landowners' (Kalecki 1972b:164–5) on the other. But he also equated the intermediate classes with 'petty bourgeois' (Kalecki 1972b:167), as others have done in later debates on India's

intermediate classes. This term bundles together a loose coalition of the small-scale capitalist class, agrarian and local agribusiness elites, and local state officials, who exercise considerable power at local and regional levels (Harriss-White 2003).

When defined in this way, such classes may be 'intermediate' in the broader national structure, but when seen from below or at the local level, they look more like rural and small-town elites. This raises the question: Are we focusing on the upper crust of the middle (town), or on its 'middle'?

We can of course define intermediate classes in any way we like, depending on our interests and what kind of analytical power we hope to achieve with our definitions. The important thing, however, is that no matter how we define a class, it is impossible to study it in isolation without exploring its relation to other classes. To study a class in isolation, or even in terms of its differences with other classes, is a contradiction in terms. Class, like capital, is a relationship, not a 'thing' (Thompson 1963). Classes therefore can only be understood in terms of their relationship with other classes: what they do with and to each other.

If we are to avoid the tunnel-vision problems of Warner's Yankee City and Geertz's Mojokuto, we should not focus exclusively on the modal or 'intermediate' groups to the exclusion of the extremes on either side of them. Neither, like the Lynds, should we focus exclusively on the relationships between and among 'elite' and 'mass', leaving out the middle. Just as in the study of rural communities, in urban studies a simplistic (or dogmatic) adherence to a focus on either the social-economic-political 'middle', or the relationships and conflict between 'elite' and 'mass' to the exclusion of the middle, are likely to produce 'blind spots' resulting in a distorted representation of urban societies and their dynamics.

The 'intermediate class' debate is actually about the future shape of rural and urban societies. In many parts of rural Indonesia we need increasingly to ask 'Who is going to own the countryside?' as corporate capital (domestic or foreign) gains access to large tracts of land for commercial cultivation of food or fuel, dispossessing peasant cultivators and leaving them the choice of a life as wage worker or impoverished contract farmer, or leaving for the city. In urban Indonesia we need to ask 'Who is going to own the city?' as informal economy yields to malls, supermarkets, global brands, franchise food chains, et cetera. Intermediate classes may be highly resilient, but the question that Kalecki raised more than forty years ago, that the possible outcome might be 'the final submission of the lower middle class to the interests of big business' (Kalecki 1972b:163), is still a valid question for today.

Fig. 2. TERNATE: A fishmonger at the central market and bus terminal poses with her stock. She's fashionably outfitted against the midday sun with a broad hat and smears left by a thin rice–flour–and–turmeric paste applied earlier to protect her skin; alas, her fish boast no similar protection from the heat.
June 2010: photo by S. Chris Brown

WORKING CLASS REVISITED: CLASS RELATIONS IN INDONESIAN PROVINCIAL TOWNS

Nicolaas Warouw

Class analysis in Indonesia has reached an impasse, from which it can be released by opening our eyes to urban anthropology. Class analysis should be made more concrete by situating it in the geography of urban community. The typically Indonesian kampung has been described as an 'urban society of the common people' (Dick 1985:75), distinguished by 'social harmony and co-operation' (Guinness 1986:184; also J. Sullivan 1992). Most members of the industrial working class live in such a kampung. In almost every aspect of their life, including their work, they have to craft relationships with members of other urban classes who live around them. I argue that the working-class sense of injustice emerges not only from industrial practices, but also from the urban vulnerabilities that they share with other urban classes whose life chances are limited. It is generated by the social heterogeneity of the locality and by the workers' identification with their communities. These form an imminent energy within the working class. When members of other classes also experience dispossession and marginalization, a working-class consciousness in semi-urban industrial centres might arise.

Democratization since the late 1990s has brought unprecedented political participation to local agents in the peripheries. Residents of distressed kampung communities have engaged in political struggle to gain access to basic state services. In the process they often contested the authority of existing cultural leaders who had long benefited from the intermediary roles they played in patronage relations.

This chapter examines working-class communities in two industrial towns, both on the coast. Cilegon is located in western Java with a population in 2008 of 346,059, and Pekalongan in central Java with a population in 2005 of 267,574. Manufacturing is the context for working-class local politics. Residents blame local notables and low-level state officials, whom they call 'elites', for poor implementation of urban policy. After the political reform following the downfall of Suharto in 1998, elites have benefited most from decentralization. The spread of power and resources to provincial towns has empowered local elites. This centralization of power in the

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hands of local elites is making the access to welfare schemes more difficult. This has prompted some industrial-labour activists to look for support among marginalized urban groups to claim welfare rights. Labour activists campaign on environmental and employment issues that affect the whole community. While many scholars of regional autonomy remain focused on elites (for instance, Webster, Stokke and Tornquist 2009:225–6), this chapter suggests that urban-neighbourhood democracy is a promising (if still underdeveloped) form of popular engagement. Democracy at this level is dynamizing both local class formation and culture-based social configurations.

Beginning with the heterogeneous class structure of local communities in these two urban industrial centres, the chapter then describes how some industrial workers adopted unusually active roles on behalf of their deprived local community. Their engagement in community-based social struggles amounted to an expression of class.

Geography

Most Indonesian cities with an industrial working class did not emerge from an industrial economy. There are exceptions, such as the nickel-mining town of Soroako in Sulawesi (Robison 1986), or the copper- and gold-mining towns of Tembagapura and Timika in Papua (Aditjondro 1982; Widjojo 1997), but manufacturing mostly grew up on the outskirts of towns in agrarian settings, aiming to benefit from the abundant supply of labour in the countryside (Mather 1983; Ratna Saptari 1995; Weix 1990). Low industrial wages were considered acceptable by people still part of a family economy (Wolf 1992). Cultural values fostering labour docility remained strong. This made rural areas ideal settings for manufacturing. State officials also had reasons to move industries away from metropolitan centres towards neighbouring rural towns. The big cities were overpopulated, already flooded with investment, and moreover threatened by political instability due to labour unrest. This explains the relocation of factories from Jakarta, west to Tangerang and east to Bekasi, during Suharto's New Order (Giebels 1983; Hadiz 1997; Stolte 1995). Already during the Sukarno era, the state-led industrialization of the rural town of Cilegon was motivated by the need to contain local 'disobedience' towards the central government and to break down 'political parochialism' (Hikam 1995; Amri Marzali 1976).

Thus industrial centres with semi-urban characteristics were rapidly established in the midst of agrarian communities. Existing social relations

embodied in local neighbourhoods often remained surprisingly intact. The industrial working class was born in this hybrid environment. Much of the scholarly literature on labour in Indonesia is misdirected for overlooking this geographical setting. Those studies that have described a working class estranged from other urban classes, and indeed from the dominant classes in general, have missed this local-community context. We can think of descriptions of industrial workers as 'prisoners' (Harris 1995) of the country's economic development, who find release in their defiance of unfair work practices and the political repression of labour. This is made possible through workers' solidarity, occasionally in alliance with progressive urban middle class elements such as students, lawyers, academics and NGO activists (for instance, Ford 2009; Hadiz 1997; Kammen 1997; La Botz 2001). The energy that the working class obtain from their local community disappears from such accounts. Having an eye for working-class engagement with other marginalized classes is also part of Herring and Agarwala's (2006) agenda for 'restoring agency to class' analysis in India.

The literature on labour in Indonesia has overwhelmingly concerned itself with labour conditions on the shopfloor; class consciousness emerges from control and resistance at the point of production. However, rather than focus exclusively on the world of work, we would gain more by expanding our view. Ratna Saptari (2003:135–6) did do this when she analysed the impact of the piece-work system by examining the impoverished urban enclave where workers live. She also explained the lack of industrial strife and the acceptance of strong workplace hierarchy by referring to the patriarchal values prevailing in the residential neighbourhood. Class is a life condition shaped by local residential relations as much as by working conditions. This view is in line with Eric Hobsbawm's (1984) 'worlds of labour' extending to the domain of values, ideologies and everyday existence in the 'natural habitation' of the workers.

The Social Structure in Local Community

Most of Pekalongan's medium-sized manufacturing establishments, and all of Cilegon's industrial estates, are on the margins of town. The local communities that host the factories and house the workers are socially heterogeneous. While downtown residential areas house people engaged in modern services, trade and public office, the communities on the periphery are shared by people from more varied walks of life. They include farmers, fishers and other non-modern sectors whose numbers

continue to decline but who never manage to make the transition to modern and formal sectors. Small traders, food stall proprietors and other informal service workers help further broaden the neighbourhood social configuration.

Industrial workers made up 21.59% of all workers in Cilegon in 2008 and 21.83% in Pekalongan in 2005. Of these, the permanent workers were the most secure, just below managers and supervisors. Most are educated and skilled, and hold responsible positions in administration and production. They enjoy the full protection of labour rights stipulated in work agreements, their salaries are well above the government-set minimum wage and, in addition, they get a variety of allowances and bonuses. In Cilegon, these position are believed mostly to be filled by 'migrants' from elsewhere in Java and from the nearby island of Sumatra. Though there are no official statistics on the ethnic composition of industrial workers, Muhammad Hikam (1995:385) reported that only a 'handful' of local people occupied such positions. Workers interviewed for this research confirmed that ethnic tensions between locals and migrants in the workplace are common.[1] The migrant workers mostly rent rooms in barrack-like housing owned by locals. This type of accommodation rather separates the migrants from the everyday life of the local community, to which, by contrast, the local workers are constantly exposed. In Pekalongan such barrack-like housing does not exist, and all workers share a house with local owners or acquire an individual house. They identify with the local community and engage in its problems, and this makes them want to stay on. In both towns, despite describing themselves as 'mere operators', the permanent workers with local identification managed to complete their education, whether high school, vocational school, non-degree or an undergraduate qualification in relevant disciplines. This enables them to handle complex machinery and hazardous chemicals in the factories of Cilegon as production operators, liquid waste controllers, or laboratory analysts. One of my Pekalongan informants had been to a vocational school in textile technology to learn specialized spinning techniques.

[1] Informants generally admitted that the locals' lack of relevant skills and education may explain the company's preferences for migrants. But Hikam (1995:348) concluded that managers adhered to a stereotyped idea that migrants were 'more docile and less demanding' than locals. Locals felt cheated out of land compensation by the establishment of new industries during the 1970s (see also Amri Marzali 1976:34–6). Moreover, Cilegon was the site of a peasant rebellion in 1888 and a communist uprising backed by Islamic religious leaders in 1926, both against Dutch colonial rule. Social revolution against local bureaucrats between 1945 and 1949 strengthened the rebellious stereotype attached to the locals (see also Kartodirdjo 1966 and M. Williams 1982).

He was head-hunted by a large textile company even before finishing the course. His employer asks him frequently to travel inter-city to examine raw materials. These established workers enjoy good, secure salaries and are respected within their local communities for this.[2]

Unlike the permanent workers, contract workers are linked to industry only by a third-party company in an outsourcing arrangement. Liberalization has made this increasingly important. Official labour figures do not include this type of labour, but PT Krakatau Steel, the country's largest steel manufacturer and based in Cilegon, had nearly 4,000 contracted workers supplied by four employment contractors in 2010. This number is set to go up when production expands under a new joint venture with one of South Korea's largest steel producers. Outsourcing contracts are likely to be signed with nine contractors. Outsourced workers perform regular jobs, ranging from non-production tasks (e.g. office boy, cleaner, gardener) to production work on the shopfloor. They are therefore at the bottom of the workplace hierarchy – not because of their job descriptions, but as a consequence of the unprotected nature of their labour. They fall outside any labour law by which the employer or the state could be held responsible. In one Cilegon industrial neighbourhood I examined, an official village-level youth organization called Karang Taruna recruited factory workers from the local community, but gave them no formal contract. There is a case where a company made a deal with a unit within the state administration office at the village level. Most of the industrial workers identifying as local were in this category. They have no access to the normal mechanism of promotion, nor to decent workplace treatment such as safety gear, a uniform and meals, nor the bonuses, allowances, pension fund or even the minimum wages regular workers enjoy.[3] The neighbourhood in the north-west of Pekalongan that I studied, meanwhile, had no outsourced labourers (although outsourcing is important in the textile industries in Pekalongan's centre and south).[4]

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[2] The skilled migrant workers in Cilegon described by Rudnyckyj (2008), by contrast, lived in secluded neighbourhoods provided by their employer. This focus prevented them from being curious about the local community.

[3] Contracted workers receive only a daily or monthly salary to cover living costs. Moreover, they are only eligible for medical treatment from health clinics, whose service is claimed by informants to be below standard. However, a serious work accident may allow them to access medical treatment from a hospital.

[4] Contracting arrangements are, in fact, typical of batik small and home industries throughout Pekalongan (Chotim 1994). The decline of local entrepreneurs due to the repeal of the state's protection policy over raw materials in 1970, as Robison (1986) and

Most workers were migrants from neighbouring towns looking for cheap housing. The north coast, with its fisheries, is vulnerable to tidal flooding.

Urban neighbourhoods also house other types of labourers who contribute indirectly to the manufacturing activity. Contractors[5] often hire unskilled locals on a casual basis to paint or repair factory buildings or to overhaul machinery. For locals to get work like this they must have good relations with one of the local personalities connected to the recruiting agency or organization. Manufacturers frequently offer casual recruitment concessions to such local figures as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR). This personalizes the relation between society and capital, something to which we will return.

When not being hired, such casual labourers are doing 'favours' for people in the neighbourhood – helping one neighbour find a truck to transport construction material, fixing the roof for another neighbour. All this in exchange for petty cash, known as a *komisi* (commission) and ostensibly to pay for cigarettes, motorbike petrol or a mobile phone voucher. Some young people make illegality an option. Locals in Cilegon use the slang word *nyekrap* (possibly from the English 'scrap') to refer to thieving scrap metal from the industries, for sale in the local black market. They have also been known to target steel poles and telephone cables passing through their own neighbourhoods, arguing these were being used more by industry and government than by the locals.

Of course manufacturing is not the only job provider in the community. In one Cilegon neighbourhood I saw home workers producing *mlinjo* crackers (a traditional snack made from mlinjo nuts) for local small entrepreneurs called *juragan emping*. Most were housewives and young women, contracted to work in their own homes at piece-rates. The entrepreneur would come in the late afternoon to collect the crisps, pay and leave fresh raw *mlinjo* for the following day's production. He employed

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Muhaimin (1991) point out, led to the closure of batik enterprises in some parts of Pekalongan. The introduction of printing technology in batik making, enabling the cost of production to fall, but leaving the capital only in the hands of a small number of big entrepreneurs, including the Indo-Chinese, exacerbated the situation whereby smaller actors, unable to contest in the competition, ceased their operation. Today, the clusters of batik industries are concentrated in the central part down to the southern area of Pekalongan. I am indebted to Amalinda Savirani for her insights on Pekalongan's batik entrepreneurs and the geographical spread of the industry.

[5] In some cases, the term 'contractor' may seem too 'industrialized', given that the role is often filled by local organizations, such as the *Karang Taruna* (youth group) affiliated to the village administration. When such an organization recruits for an industrial company, the workers have even less protection than those recruited by a bona fide outsourcing company.

around two hundred workers. In a coastal neighbourhood of Pekalongan workers in small-to-medium-scale fisheries-related industries were making block ice, processing canned or salted fish and building wooden boats. Local entrepreneurs supplied the local fishing economy and a town-wide market. In both towns these home industries were largely informal; their compliance with government fiscal and labour regulations was limited.[6] Businesses are registered, have permissions from the municipal authority and can receive local bank loans, but they pay below-minimum wages and provide insufficient labour protection. Workers in such an economy are best categorized as informal. The category extends to the already-mentioned contract workers and casual labour in large industries.

Both towns have a considerable number of small-scale fishers in coastal neighbourhoods. Particularly in Pekalongan, they enter into a profit-sharing arrangement with owners of large and more powerful boats, allowing them to sail to deep water for bigger catches. The downside is that they thereby lose their connection with the local fish-processing industries, which refuse to buy from profit-sharing fishers because they ask a higher price. As a result, these fishers can only sell their catch at the municipal auction centre, where extortion is rife. Declining profits have forced some of them to shift to land fishery (ponds and rivers) where they can sell to the more profitable local fisheries-related industries. The Cilegon fishing economy is even smaller. There fishermen have no connection with local entrepreneurs. Their small boats with weak engines yield small catches in shallow water. A more powerful engine requires a special licence from the government fisheries authority. Locals believe chemical run-off has caused coastal fish stocks to decline. They have limited room to manoeuvre among the huge industrial ships and tankers and the commercial ferries running to Sumatra. Moreover, industrial plants block most road access to the coast, making it difficult for fishermen to transport their catch to market. As a result, price-fixing middlemen who connect fishers with the market have become increasingly crucial to their survival.

Cilegon's small farmers also need the middlemen, whom they call 'big boss'. Half of the town's surface area is covered by hilly forest and agricultural landscapes. When the municipal authority relocated the local markets away from the farming neighbourhood to downtown, these farmers found it hard, financially and psychologically, to sell their products at the

[6] For the definition of 'informal sector', see Portes, Castells and Benton 1989 and Agarwala 2006:420–2.

new, more distant market. The farmers also experience declining production. They blame air pollution and contaminated water on Cilegeon's industries.

Moving up the social ladder, there are 'elite' classes within the local community who do have a more direct relationship with formal business, such as the industrial companies, and with the lower state bureaucracy at the municipal administration. Among them are the crisps-making entrepreneurs and labour-contracting agencies in Cilegon, and the large boat-owners in Pekalongan. Cilegon's heavy industries also grant community concessions to recycle industrial solid waste as a gesture of corporate social responsibility.[7] But only 'strong men' (*orang kuat*) have the finance and connections to benefit from the recycling business. This marks the rise of entrepreneurs who deploy their local identity and claim to represent the locals to gain contracts from the surrounding large industries. They provide services ranging from labour supply, overhaul and repair works to waste recycling and office supplies.

Such entrepreneurs come not only from the private sector but also from local officialdom. One recycling concession was offered to a senior village official in Cilegon. Corporate contracts become slush funds for local power struggles. A 2004 law on local government stipulates that lower officials can only be appointed by the mayor or district head. In practice this means the village apparatus has become part of the political machine of the incumbent local head of government. During the mayoral election in Cilegon in early 2010, residents deplored the inclination of village officials to direct people to vote for the incumbent's preferred candidate.[8] In a bid to build political allegiances, municipal-level officials and politicians have pushed through regulations directing industries to channel contracts and CSR schemes to 'local' interests. Local entrepreneurs interested in concessions from surrounding large companies consequently need to demonstrate adherence to political elites and municipal officials. Success depends on their ability to build connections between the neighbourhood and the municipality. This web of entrepreneurs and officials appears to be typical to Cilegon. The small entrepreneurs on

[7] During the political turmoil in 1998, the locals ransacked the surrounding factories and looted metal bars, pipes, iron fences or other large objects considered to have economic value. This was caused by social and economic disparity in Cilegon, where the locals felt that they were not the direct beneficiaries of the town's industrialization. The CSR programme grew out of that period.

[8] The mayor, by law, was not allowed to run as he was already in his second term. The mayor's preferred candidate, who was in fact his son, won the election.

Pekalongan's coast have no such web and are thus less dependent on state officials.

Other important figures in the social structure of the urban neighbourhood are those with social and cultural authority. In both towns there are Islamic religious leaders known as *kyai*, and in Cilegon there is the 'traditional' role known as *jawara*, or martial hero. Cilegon lies in Muslim-majority Banten, where the *kyai* have always combined religious authority with a degree of political power. Even today they have to negotiate between community expectations and their own need for power, as I will show below. *Jawara* is an informal leader and a traditional title in Bantenese society conferred upon a person considered to have the capacity (often related to martial arts) to protect the community from disruptive external forces.[9] A tendency to put their own interests above those of the community led Oji Armuji (2004:93) to identify their modus operandi with the words 'anarchism' and 'pragmatism'. Their capacity to mobilize pressure using threats and violence has made *jawara* targets for recruitment by powerful forces in Cilegon who need to control popular criticism (Armuji 2004:94; Hikam 1995). Some *jawara* today are functionaries of the incumbent mayor's political party. Others have become entrepreneurs who pressure large companies for business concessions 'on behalf of the community'.

Such threats and violence can also be observed in Pekalongan, but there they are less connected with the bureaucracy. The decline of the fishing economy caused by extortion in the municipal markets, mentioned briefly earlier, is connected with the so-called 'land people' (*orang darat*). The term lumps together a range of intermediate actors spread out all along the way, from the point the fishermen dock their boat after returning from the sea, to the fish auction centre. They include temporarily unemployed local sailors and fish trolley porters. Petty gangsters and fixers claim to be responsible for 'security' in the area and for the 'smooth operation' of the fishing activity. Fishermen complain that their catches have been reduced to half by the time they arrive at the auction centre. This chain of extortion got so bad that it discouraged large boat-owners, with whom the fishermen had entered into a profit-sharing deal, from

[9] During colonial times, the *jawara* was a leader and single fighter who protected the interests of local people or 'local tentants' in a bonded community in their resistance against the Dutch or 'private estate owners' (Shahab 2001:1–3; see also Abeyasekere 1987:67). My past study in Tangerang reveals the connection of *jawara* to manufacturing industries that use them to control labour activism in the neighbourhood (Warouw 2006).

dispatching their fleets. Fishing profits declined until owners were only able to recover basic expenses.

The Intermediate Classes and their Adversaries

Barbara Harriss-White (2003:241) deploys the term 'intermediate classes' to describe 'a loose coalition of the small-scale capitalist class, agrarian and local agribusiness elites, and local state officials' typically found in Indian country towns. The coalition aims to gain access to 'state resources' and 'concessions by influencing policy in its implementation'. Gerry van Klinken (2009:888), speaking of Indonesia, characterizes these classes by their 'non-market mechanisms such as patriarchy, ethnic and religious solidarity, and the threat of violence'. All these techniques have the potential to undermine the authority of the state by converting government policies and subsidies for their own benefit. In fact, he continues, their 'mobilizing skills' have been used by the state to reinforce the presence of the state and to endorse the government's policies in exchange for rewarding concessions.

The term 'intermediate classes' applies well to the local elites we have described above. In Cilegon, the capacity of the intermediate classes to control the economy at the neighbourhood level is evident in different forms. These intermediary classes have the capacity to arrange the supply of labour to companies, and furthermore they benefit from their privileged access to state institutions. The money they earn supports their dominance within the community.

The term 'intermediate classes' in the first place covers local state officials, who are typical intermediaries extending the administrative authority of the state to the population. But at the same time their access to the local community allows them to arrange employment opportunities at newly established companies. These officials have leverage with higher municipal authorities to make regulations directing corporate contracts to these companies. It is this capacity to craft beneficial regulations that forces local entrepreneurs to maintain personal connections with them; this includes financial sponsorship for electoral campaigns. Thus the rent-seeking partnership of entrepreneurs, government officials and the corporate CRS managers rests on non-market mechanisms, particularly the skills to maintain social relations that enable the manipulation of state regulation.

In the second place the term intermediate classes is appropriate for certain religious and traditional leaders in these two towns. The use of

cultural and traditional symbols to secure resources from the state and the companies is apparent in their capacity for threats and violence. *Kyai* who lead Islamic organizations enjoy access to state funding for religious activities and prayer facilities open to the whole community. Community figures such as *jawara* get funding from local officials essentially to curb community discontent. Such figures are vital to secure votes for the town's higher elites. Those considered *jawara* can ask the politicians at election time for anything they wanted, and they can also ask freely from the companies, in exchange for 'protection'.[10] Success enhances their authority in the community – they have cultural capital and the skills to pull resources from the state and from industry.

Despite their evident success, these actors who profit from 'non-market mechanisms' are often in conflict with other small local capitalists – those who do live by their market skills, who are less dependent on state agencies and large companies. In Pekalongan, the boat-owning entrepreneurs were annoyed with them for extorting the fishing economy nearly to death by their threats and violence. The extortion was particularly visible given, as described by some local informants, that these actors had connections with officials in the village administration who benefit from such practice. The result was the virtual extinction of coastal fisheries in Pekalongan. The Cilegon crisps-making entrepreneurs similarly could not decline when *jawara* asked for 'protection' money. Local officials made things worse by refusing to help unless offered more money. This type of conflict led some local entrepreneurs to enter into collaboration with less-privileged social forces in the urban community. It is to this collaboration that we now turn, since it brings the workers back into view.

Cilegon

During Cilegon's 2010 local elections, a number of crisps-making entrepreneurs allied with their home workers to support a rival to the mayor's preferred candidate, whose nickname was Mumu. They hoped a new mayor independent of the current one would lower barriers to their business created by *jawara* and local officials. In short, they hoped for a democratic escape from the political machine of the town's dominant intermediate class elites. They particularly directed their challenge at local-neighbourhood agents loyal to the incumbent mayor. Here their efforts converged with a separate electoral effort initiated by some industrial workers

[10] In Cilegon they also run lucrative informal 'protection' services for industries, stores, the seaport, bus terminals and traditional markets (Armuji 2004:93).

resident in the same neighbhourhood. The workers had their own complaints against the ruling intermediate classes, namely that the latter were seizing state welfare schemes and social programmes for themselves and their cronies that were intended for the whole community.

These workers, employed full-time in the town's heavy industries, had begun holding informal gatherings after their day in the factories. In the beginning, these meetings were aimed at responding to moves made by the incumbent mayor's political party in the run-up to the 2009 parliamentary election. They brought together unemployed young people and industrial contract workers. The talk was about the problems with the local 'elites' – referring locally to politicians, officials and *jawara* – about unemployment, and the gap between locals and migrants. One of the workers, Affan, told me at the time that the forum had no intention to form an organization and only wanted to encourage young people not to become aggressive every time they encountered problems. He wanted the forum to transform 'local boys' (*anak kampung*), who displayed the aggressive behaviour regarded as typical of the Bantenese, into citizens with broader insights into the way they could respond to industrialization and modernization in their town.[11]

When I attended one of these meetings it struck me as interesting how clearly these underprivileged residents saw all the 'elite' (intermediate class) social forces – the rent-seeking entrepreneurs, the *kyai*, the *jawara* and the local officials – as obstacles to their own access to the state. They realized that the opportunities for employment, for access to welfare schemes such as health insurance and subsidized rice, and for participation in CSR programmes, were only available to those prepared to become clients to those that I have here called the intermediate classes, or sometimes '*elit*' (elites), as my informants put it to me. Despite low educational achievement and locality-bound insights, these young unemployed people refused to be contained by the local elites whose lives were so conspicuously distinct from the rest of the population. They were angry about having been stigmatized by the elites as 'sinners' (*murtad*) and 'rubbish' (*sampah*) for their acts of petty crime. They realized the resources in elite hands were being devoted merely to personal ambition and to buy

[11] Most of the young, unemployed locals remained engaged in their small world of Cilegon, despite the easy transport possibilities to Jakarta or Sumatra. One of my unemployed informants had never even travelled outside of Banten province. One worker told me he believed marginalized young men in his neighbourhood engaged in thieving and thuggery because they had never travelled.

loyalties. Others expressed disappointment with them for failing to set up a labour training centre in the neighbourhood to improve the chances of the unemployed. Contract labourers wanted better employment conditions in surrounding manufacturing establishments. A permanent position is regarded as ideal employment by residents in the urban industrial neighbourhood, not only because of the better conditions, but because it would release them from the patronage (*kekuasaan*) of the intermediate classes. All this amounted to criticism of the incumbent mayor for failing to prioritize secure industrial employment in the neighbourhood. Instead, he had been busy extending his patronage throughout the town.

Eventually these informal gatherings turned to spontaneous political action. During the 2009 general legislative elections, the residents split their votes to undermine Golkar, the party of the incumbent mayor. Golkar had been the dominant party since long before the 1998 *reformasi*, and even in 2009 the party had offered them money in exchange for their vote; but 2009 marked the end of the party's supremacy in the neighbourhood. This local experiment in bringing together an alternative coalition to challenge the incumbent mayor and his intermediate classes was repeated during the mayoral election of 2010. As the local workers put it, they wanted 'to humiliate' (*mempermalukan*) the circles close to the incumbent mayor for failing to provide for those on the margins.[12]

In another initiative in the same neighbourhood, a group of residents protested against environmental contamination by certain industries. They were upset that members of the local assembly neither visited the area immediately following a particularly significant leak of gases from the production process into the air, leaving local residents with respiratory problems, nausea and dizziness, nor even made a statement regarding the incident.[13] The group was initiated by workers from the same chemical factory that caused the leak. It accused local officials of making a backdoor agreement with the company. A worker from the group, Dedi, said that local 'elites' with vested interests in the industries were always the biggest obstacle to solving pollution problems. This made them uninterested in mediating between residents and the company over contamination. The group did not want to challenge the companies and the state

[12] The preferred candidate of the mayor (it was his son) still won, but only with 45.6% of the vote, much less than before. The residents felt anything below 50% was a major blow. The closest contender, a local entrepreneur popular amongst neighbourhood residents, managed to reap 36.13%.

[13] News items on www.Liputan6.com, 16 December 2009.

but simply wanted greater access to resources made available by the industries and the government, and thus form a bridge between the locals and the companies. Their position as workers in those units that were directly related to production ensured they had sufficient knowledge of the manufacturing process to be able to identify which hazardous substances were being used. Dedi maintained that it was not about getting rid of the industries, but about taking care (*menjaga*) of industrial assets in a residential neighbourhood. Accommodating residents' discontent would minimize conflict, he felt.

Pekalongan

The issues in the Pekalongan neighbourhood (Cangkring) that I studied were different, but the basic problem of state services being hijacked by intermediate classes was the same. At issue here was the absence of public facilities due to bad urban planning. The other problem was the lack of clean water, as the neighbourhood lay beyond the boundaries of the municipal water supply. Shallow local wells contained high levels of dissolved chemicals and suspended solids typical of the town's coastal areas. Bypassing reluctant village officials, community representatives went to the municipal government to request a deep well. Although the area technically fell outside municipal infrastructure planning, the government accepted the proposal. The municipal authority also granted the community permission to distribute the water from the government-facilitated communal well and to charge households for the electricity used by the pump. In short, their first encounter with public officials immediately produced a real sign of recognition. One of the central figures in this Pekalongan initiative was Turah, who worked full-time in a textile factory. He had learned about water and electricity management from his company. He later successfully asked the municipal government to improve the pump, to install a water tank and, even, to build a small office so the water administration would no longer be run from a residential house.

Efforts to bring 'life' into the recently settled community extended to the conversion of abandoned land into a fish pond and a nursery for medicinal and cooking plants to accommodate fishermen losing their income as a result of the declining fishing economy. A few hectares of this unused land were actually borrowed from Turah's own company. The company went further and offered the community a loan to develop fish-breeding ponds. These efforts also enabled the low-income residents of another nearby neighbourhood and its surrounding communities to

improve their economy and make better use of the environment. In addition, residents brought a sense of normalcy into the community that previously had no legal entitlement by simply naming their street, in order to enable outsiders to identify them as a community and to find an address. They saw street-naming as an inaugural effort for social recognition. (Even so, some even more 'local' figures initially pulled out the street signs until their 'permission' had been sought).

The municipal government is proud of having brought social and environmental development to a previously non-recognized and disadvantaged community. It regards the work in Cangkring, including the collaboration between the residents and industrial firms, as a model for its programme in poverty alleviation and environmental management of slum areas.[14] It invited Turah and some of his colleagues to share his experiences in deep-well drilling and water management with other neighbourhoods around Pekalongan. Turah now has easy access to government officials including the mayor, to lawmakers and corporate agencies. They recognize his role as mediator connecting impoverished urban residents with the authorities.

Morever, Turah brought the fishermen to the mayor in the government offices to explain their problems. The mayor responded by ordering the fisheries authority to strictly oversee the harbour and the fish auction centre to protect the fishermen. This helped revive the fisheries economy in northern Pekalongan. The government also facilitated the construction of houses for fishermen along the coast. The mayor was chairman of the local Golkar branch. Turah then decided to join Golkar and campaign for him at the next local election. He said he was impressed that the mayor had kept his promise of rehabilitating the health, education and housing conditions of the poor in his neighbourhood. His neighbours did not blame him for joining the New Order party Golkar – they appreciated what he had done for them. Turah said that being close to the mayor had been the only way to bring people's aspirations to the correct authorities.

Initiatives by local residents in Cilegon and Pekalongan reveal the limitations of intermediate-class patronage as democratization deepens at the local level. Residents wanted direct contact – patrons were obstacles who distanced them from the state and the companies, and who seized

[14] Certain individuals within the municipal government were credited in the national media for the success of these poverty alleviation and slum environment management programmes (*Gatra*, 13 February 2008; *Radar Pekalongan*, 11 June 2010). However, the reports made almost no reference to the role played by community figures like Turah.

rents that should have gone to the marginalized. Contrary to those scholars who argue that democratization is strengthening the role of predatory intermediate classes, my close observation in these two places (which may indeed not be representative of all of Indonesia) shows that sometimes democratization is weakening their power. Regular free and fair local elections are allowing residents to act on their frustration with the neighbourhood-based 'elites' whose intimidation and flattery have long blocked their own access to state and corporate services. As they built their own direct links with the town's major economic and political forces, they built loose, semi-institutionalized alternative alliances to defend their own interests.

Working Class and Changing Class Relations

These neighbourhood experiences in Cilegon and Pekalongan expose two somewhat contradictory class dynamics in the semi-urban communities of industrializing provincial towns. One is a long-standing pattern of what might be called domination by predatory intermediate classes. The other is a counter-movement from below. The first pattern arose as local economic actors became incorporated into a modern industrial economy. The industries' need for informal contract labour privileged local entrepreneurs – neighbourhood notables and public officials – who deployed 'non-market' mechanisms to recruit workers on exploitative terms. These outsourcing agencies made good profits for themselves. Their bargaining position with the big companies rested on 'traditional' claims to represent the community, which in reality involved the capacity to pose threats.

Moreover, political decentralization actually strengthened the position of these local operators, who were seen as patrons by their own communities. Lacking a populist agenda to rally sympathy from the masses compelled the local government to work through intermediaries such as religious leaders and other influential big men. Where industry is less intrusive, such as in Pekalongan, the failure of the municipal government to reach people in urban peripheries leaves space for similar operators. Using threats, intimidation and local sentiment, they wheedle fishermen and new settlers out of their money while making themselves indispensable to local officials. In both towns, neighbourhood-based 'elites' use their access to bureuacratic and corporate resources mainly for their own purposes.

These arrangements clearly come at a cost to underprivileged urban classes, who, as underemployed subcontracted labourers, are left almost

entirely without protection. The dissatisfaction among the unemployed in particular results in aggressive behaviour and criminality. Fishermen attribute their deteriorating subsistence to industrialization as well as to extortionate practices by intermediate-class local elites. All struggle to access local-government welfare services that could relieve their distress.

This chapter has examined a counter-movement from below in the two neighbourhoods studied. Democratization and decentralization have opened up a little-noticed new arena for workers, one that is located in their semi-urban kampung residential neighbourhoods. Here the old agrarian patron–client relations are in decline, while the harsh divide between labour and capital is somewhat softened. Dissatisfaction with the local figures and small capitalists who used to provide protection and certainty – people this chapter has identified as 'intermediate classes' – is growing. Meanwhile, full-time industrial workers, who would normally rely on traditional relations to defend them from harsh industrial exploitation (Elmhirst 2003; Wolf 1992), are now likely to be in a relation with less tension with their industrial employers. In my neighbourhoods they even became intermediaries for the industries' CSR programmes towards the local community. Some have found themselves becoming trusted intermediaries for channelling state welfare schemes in neighbourhoods previously beyond the state's reach. These developments have placed these mediating full-time workers into a loose alliance with lower urban classes, including the informal working class. This new alliance is quite unlike that observed between industrial working classes and intellectuals belonging to the urban middle classes during the 1990s (Ford 2009; Hadiz 1997; Kammen 1997; La Botz 2001).

Semi-urban poor neighbourhoods face a myriad of difficulties. Workers who live there become engaged in social activism. Their embeddedness in the everyday struggle of their own communities has shifted their arena of engagement away from the point of production towards their kampung. These permanent workers have a commitment to the industries, which have given them secure jobs and prestige. They realize that industrial decline would affect the livelihood of the entire town. Their attachment both to their local society and to the state and capital allows them to bridge the two, bypassing the authority of the old intermediate classes.

These initiatives have seen citizens re-engage with the state rather than building a different logic of power separate from the state and the companies. The activism parallels Indian experiments with community politics, which are also redefining the relationship between society and the state. Partha Chatterjee (2004) argues that alternate, somewhat informal, associations at the neighbourhood level ensure members' social well-being

even when surrounded by urban hardship. The associations facilitate 'the duties of good citizenship' (Chatterjee 2004:60). This is, in the Indian context, what Chatterjee, following Michel Foucault (1991), calls 'governmentality'. It is the capacity of communities not recognized as part of civil society to 'claim the benefits of various governmental programs [...] [by] bending or stretching [the] [governmental machinery and] rules because existing procedures have historically worked to exclude or marginalize them'.

Closing Remarks

Post-Suharto local politics have empowered local actors by means of frequent local elections combined with the effective decentralization of government policy and resources allocation. Democracy has been deepened as civil society has grown (Erb, Priyambudi Sulistiyanto and Faucher 2006; Erb and Priyambudi Sulistiyanto 2009; Schulte Nordholt and Van Klinken 2007b). Also in Indonesian provincial towns, democracy has created more room to manoeuvre for independent social sectors such as entrepreneurs, NGOs activists and concerned intellectuals. They are particularly keen to take their distance from 'elite patronage' (Van Klinken 2009:157). This chapter has explored how the dominance of the intermediate classes in the provincial towns, such as traditional leaders, small capitalists and local state officials, is being contested by the urban underclasses demanding state welfare services and corporate compensation to protect them from the consequences of their largely informal employment. As these underprivileged workers become incorporated into the market economy through industrialization, and as democracy makes the state more present to them, some are able to throw off their role of traditional clients to the town's intermediate classes at the local-neighbourhood level. These are classes with differential access to political procedures and institutional practices as compared to the powerful neighbourhood-based elites at many different levels. Their different forms of capital, defined in social and cultural terms, has enabled them to create political space in their respective localities to defy established elites. Their experiences of exclusion lead to initiatives that become a rallying point for citizenship claims even in distant areas of the country. These factors altogether allow the industrial working class to secure the position as new intermediary for local residents.

Engagement in these mediating functions does not necessarily lead to social mobility of industrial workers. In spite of their different life chances

by comparison with the underemployed informal-sector workers, given their higher status in the workplace, industrial workers remain part of their own community and are involved in the same everyday struggles as all its other residents. The local neighbourhood with its social predicaments, therefore, can form the basis for a new working-class identity and solidarity. The lesser degree of tension in industrial relations, wherever a level of wages and working conditions considered to be just and sufficient by workers discussed here are in place, also marks the shift of the arena of working-class struggle from the shopfloor to the residential neighbourhood.

The sense of justice does not melt as workers leave the shopfloor. Some may object that my observations imply that full-time workers will simply become the new predatory intermediate classes in these towns. Further research is required to prove or disprove this point. As it is, I agree with the conclusions of Diane Davis (1999), who observed similar transformations in Latin America. Rather than exacerbating the 'state and civil society divide' or creating 'dichotomization', she wrote, an ongoing transformation is bringing representations 'of this inaccessible state down to a more attainable and manageable level' and thus place citizens back in a 'social contract' with the state.

Fig 3: KUPANG: Girl absorbed in a cell phone game while older kids play street soccer in downtown kupang. Cell phones, with radios, games, music, cameras, and web access, are the new babysitters all over Indonesia.
June 2010: photo by S. Chris Brown

CLASS *MOBIL*: CIRCULATION OF CHILDREN IN THE MAKING OF MIDDLE INDONESIA

Jan Newberry

Mas Hadi had bought a car. This was the biggest news in the kampung neighbourhood when I visited in 2006.[1] The new car, or *mobil*, was actually a used minivan. The listing of its many flaws and its description as bad, or *jelek*, did not mask his family's glee in having it. The *mobil* was in fact a great boon to this family, living a stone's throw from the Yogyakarta *kraton*, the palace of the sultan. Although better off than some of the downtown kampung, this neighbourhood was likewise home to densely packed houses of the urban lower classes (Robison 1996). Site of innumerable small, home-based enterprises along with low-level civil servants, clerks and teachers, this kampung neighbourhood was more often described by locals as the home of many of the faithful servants of the sultan, the *abdi dalem*. It also served as residence for scrappy lower-class entrepreneurs, crooks and schemers typical of urban kampung. For all of them, the arrival of a *mobil* marked the attainment of a new level of consumption and the possibility of middle-class mobility. Yet, the car also marked a kind of family resource whose use demonstrated patterns of kampung kinship, even as it showed a widening class gap within the family. Although Mas Hadi had moved to a new housing development with his young family, he left the *mobil* in the kampung at his mother's house where it was used by his large extended family. Every day he brought his young son to this house, centre of a dense network of kin, so that Ari would attend the same neighbourhood school Mas Hadi himself had attended and so experience an upbringing much like his own.

Kampung are urban enclaves understood to be home to lower-class Javanese who are rough and unrefined (*kasar* in Indonesian). In contrast to wealthier, more refined street-side residents, they are described as

[1] Located in the central court city of Yogyakarta, Central Java, Indonesia, this kampung neighbourhood has been the site of my ethnographic fieldwork since the early 1990s. Mas Hadi was the oldest son of the kampung family that had served as my most important source of social support, both as personal support and as valued cultural interpreters. I gratefully acknowledge the support from KITLV's Middle Indonesia project, and from the Asia Research Institute of the National University of Singapore.

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'little people' (*wong cilik* in Javanese[2]) (Guinness 1991). The kampung class has typically not been described as part of the Indonesian middle.[3] Yet by considering the middle from the perspective of these lower-class urbanites, sources of class differentiation and definition can be seen from another perspective, one that counters normative descriptions of the middle class as part of modernization even as it resituates culture understood in relation to production in the manner of Bourdieu (1984), and earlier of Raymond Williams (1961, 1977).[4] The kampung class has been generally neglected in treatments of class in Indonesia (but see Guinness 1986, 1991, 2009; J. Sullivan 1980, 1986, 1992; N. Sullivan 1983, 1994). More to the point here, the role of family practices and child-rearing as markers of class and sources of its reproduction have not been placed at the centre of any consideration of class.

The kampung class is defined in large measure by being an urban form, and in the following it is approached through the lens of urban family and kinship. Class mobility, then, refers to the spatial mobility afforded by the *mobil*, but also to changing class position. This chapter identifies both the constraints on kampung mobility and its structural twin, forced mobility. The socialization of kampung children, and the circulation of children to improve family circumstances, becomes a window on forms of classed embodiment.

See the Middle from the Kampung Class

Attention to the kampung class interrupts the conversation on the middle class in Indonesia. Hildred Geertz (1963:35), whose work forms a significant part of the following account, described the urban environment in mid-century Indonesia as producing a 'metropolitan superculture' of urban elites. More recent attention to the middle class in Indonesia has focused on its patterns of consumption (Shiraishi 2004) and the divergence in the

[2] Javanese is the local language. Unless otherwise noted, interviews were conducted in the national language.

[3] The CIA's *World Factbook* (2012) puts Indonesian urbanization at 44% of the population. The World Bank (2012) describes Java as 67% urbanized, with a total of 78 million people living in cities, and predicts 61% urbanization for the country as a whole in 2025. This same document notes that 32% of the poor were in urban areas in 1999, the highest ratio in developing East Asia (to which Indonesia belongs in this report).

[4] The analysis of culture in the Marxian mode (Corrigan and Sayer 1985; Roseberry 1989; Thompson 1967; Willis 1977) has fallen out of favour in anthropology, although it remains strong in cultural studies. Recent work on the anthropology of the state touches on these issues from a different angle (Steinmetz 1999; Blom Hansen and Stepputat 2001).

Indonesian middle class from standard descriptions of a middle class in the fashion of the European bourgeoisie (Heryanto 2003; see also Crouch 1986). Its self-conscious fashioning as a class and its democratic potential have been assessed (Dick 1985; Crouch 1994). While political science may have 'annexed' the definitions of the middle at one point (Van Leeuwen 2011), a cultural-studies approach that considers consumption, style and aesthetics seems to have gained a foothold as well. What remains little attended to is the practical consciousness of embodied culture as an element of class, and the key role of kinship and family in its reproduction.

This chapter adopts a different tack for understanding middle Indonesia by describing it from the perspective of the kampung class in Central Java. This class-from-below approach helps define the edges of the emerging middle (cf. Heryanto 2003). At the same time its ethnographic grounding in Central Java demonstrates the ongoing reproduction of particular forms of Javanese flexibility that illustrate the structuration of shared cultural disposition (Giddens 1984). The work presented here suggests that one of the untold stories of Indonesia is the role of the kampung class in conferring stability in its long-term-growth trajectory. It serves as a bulwark against extremist political violence (see also Van Klinken 2009b).

Approaching the middle through the kampung class also demonstrates that production in the constitution of this class-in-the-making must not be forgotten. In contrast to work by Beatty (2002), who notes a fundamental Javanese relativism that is not contingent upon structural conditions of economy and politics, this work suggests that the kampung class is made in large measure through its role in the Indonesian economy. That is, the kampung class is constituted in part through class mobility and constraint that derives from its structural position as much as agentive patterns of consumption. Yet, this production cannot be divorced from a habitus of shared lifestyle, a self-conscious culture of community and embodied forms of distinction (Bourdieu 1984). The work presented here suggests that the kampung class is profoundly shaped through its economic role in the Indonesian economy, but also by forms of practical consciousness that extend and reproduce this class position and produce a remarkably durable structure of feeling (R. Williams 1961, 1977).

In the following, as one means to map the topology of the middle in Indonesia, the twin pulls of knowing one's place and seeking to transcend it are located at three points: the production of kampung consciousness, the socialization of kampung children and the circulation of children through adoptive relationships (*anak angkat*).

The Production of Kampung Consciousness

In the 1990s, the emergence of a self-conscious middle class-for-itself that took a particularly 'intellectual' approach to democratization was matched with the rapid growth of new industrial capacity as well as gated suburban housing settlements in Jakarta's peri-urban periphery (Van Leeuwen 2011; Kusno 2000). Van Leeuwen traces the history of scholarship on Indonesia's middle class to Hildred Geertz's (1961) early identification of an urban middle class. The connection to Geertz is doubly significant here given her work on child socialization attended to below. The kampung class is generally overlooked as a political force, but instead is taken to represent backwardness (Kusno 2000) and the site for intervention to alleviate social problems. Yet, forms of kampung production and the related forms of embodied class consciousness may provide important stabilizing effects as the kampung class serves as counterweight to rapid change, even as its reproduction serves to anchor people in place.

Indonesia appears to be weathering the global financial downturn in better shape than one might have expected given the tumultuous effects of the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s. The stability of the economy can be related to several factors. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono cracked down on unrest and opened the country to increased foreign direct investment. On the other hand, it might be argued that the success of the economy requires less explanation than the lack of its success in the post-Independence era, given Indonesia's rich natural resources. Crony capitalism (Robison and Hadiz 2004) and high levels of corruption are typically identified as root causes, while incoherent management due to regional autonomy played a role as well (Schulte Nordholt and Van Klinken 2007b). One element in Indonesia's economic stability that has received less attention comprises the very small, home-based industries in kampung neighbourhoods. As Hadiz (2002) notes, Indonesia's competitive advantage has long relied on its labour surplus economy. Southeast Asia generally has been a source of cheap, often female, labour on global assembly lines (Wolf 1992; Hill 1996) and has exported female domestic labour throughout Asia and the Middle East. But the largely female workforce in micro-industries has received less attention.

In an argument developed elsewhere (Newberry 2006, 2007), kampung neighbourhoods are described as the site of the reproduction of a large reserve army of labour, in part through social welfare programmes that harness the voluntary labour of women. State administration of

communities under the New Order had the effect of mobilizing women as unpaid social welfare labour. It simultaneously positioned them in the home as wives and mothers who also supported husbands and children who were half-employed, occasionally employed, employed in low-skill labour or simply unemployed. Programmes such as the national housewives association (Pembinaan Kesejahateraan Keluarga, PKK), which are underwritten by local forms of administration below the civil service, combine with the ideal of a supportive home community to support the reproduction of very cheap labour.

This aspect of the state-ordered gendered division of labour is evident in the provision of small amounts of credit and grants along with education on small industries (*usaha kerajinan kecil*). Kellett et al. (2001) have used the term 'micro-scale home-based enterprises' (HBE) to describe these industries that blur and reconfigure the 'spatial and conceptual boundaries between work and home, between production and reproduction' in order to generate income and sustain themselves. The Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (Badan Pusat Statistik, BPS) has defined micro-enterprises (called cottage industries) as those with 1–4 workers; small enterprises as those with 5–19; medium enterprises as those with 20–99; and large enterprises as those with over 100 workers (Berry, Rodriguez and Sandee 2001). Kampung are the site for the full range of these enterprises, including even some large ones. In the 1996 census, micro-enterprises dominated in number of workers, as they did in the past. Micro-enterprises represented 75.4% of workers in manufacturing in 1975 (3,900,000 workers); 49.3% in 1986 (2,714,000 workers); and 39.9% in 1996 (4,076,000; Berry, Rodriguez and Sandee 2001:365). Yet, as Berry, Rodriguez and Sandee (2001:365) note, 'in 1996, 40% of *all* workers were found in units of under 5 workers'. Brata (2007) demonstrates the continuing importance of small enterprises by citing 2006 statistics that 91% of employment in Indonesia is in small enterprises. The non-governmental sphere has also played a role in encouraging the development of these small-scale industries as part of a global model aimed at grassroots development, along the lines, for example, of micro-credit programmes.

The identification of the kampung as a class formation, then, is derived in part from this involution in economic activities through the proliferation of small industries within them. It is central to the provision of one of Indonesia's key comparative advantages: cheap labour. And whether this labour materializes as factory-wage-earning labour, or quickly absorbed and dismissed manual labour, or overseas domestic labour, or local small industries labour, the advantage of cheap reproduction is clear (Guinness

2009; Meillassoux 1981). The key thing here is that the labour produced in kampung is cheap because it is precarious and informal.

Global regimes of flexible accumulation and late capitalism are cited as the cause of increased labour precarity (Arnold 2008; Harvey 1990; Ong 1999). This informalization of labour is a continuous process of undermining labour stability and the prospect of secure, well-remunerated work and benefits. Such an analysis reflects a nostalgia for the Fordist compromise that ruled the developed north Atlantic during the mid-twentieth century. Yet, no such nostalgia is possible in Java, where labour has long been informal and where, to the contrary, it might be argued that kampung forms of precarious, informal labour have long served to stabilize, manage and reproduce labour. That is to say, the kampung economy, rather ironically, provides stability as it underwrites the precarity, or flexibility, of labour in Indonesia.

A young girl in the extended family described here moved between households in a relationship that looks much like the *anak angkat* relationships detailed later. I had known her since she was a child. In my most recent fieldtrip, I learned that she was working in a factory in Bekasi, an industrial area on the outskirts of Jakarta. Meanwhile a variety of livelihood activities were occurring in the house where she was born and raised. They included cooking candy to be sold, name card printing, piecework labour, haircutting, a small snack and drink stall, numbers games, as well as the provision of spiritual help to win at them. What then is remarkable, is not that a young woman had gone to Jakarta to work in a factory, but rather the myriad, legal and illegal, informal jobs of those who stayed put. They were surviving at the edge of the formal economy as always-available labour for whatever industry developed in the neighbourhood. No one expected this young woman to last at her factory job for very long, and it was understood that she could return home to be supported, as all the rest of her siblings were, by the make-work kampung labour of their mother and her relatives.

As significant as the precarity of labour for the analysis proposed here is the reproduction of a particular kampung consciousness. Indeed, it is here that the role of the kampung class in defining the middle is made apparent. An ideal of mutual self-help, or *gotong royong*, and community values of mutual obligation and support are key parts of kampung identity (Bowen 1986; see also Guinness 2009; Warouw 2006). Ultimately, this rhetoric of community self-help validates the reproduction of those who are under- and unemployed, even as it legitimizes women's gendered labour in support of their families and communities. These lower-class

enclaves are bounded in more than one way: by the architecture of streets and walls; by forms of community organization, such as the neighbourhood civil security patrol (*ronda*); by administrative management by municipal authorities; but also by modes of dress, interaction and social relationships. In some contrast to Hildred Geertz's observation (1963) of formlessness in the early 1960s, kampung neighbourhoods are organized, formally and informally, at a variety of levels. Thus, the sense of a bounded community has multiple, reinforcing sources. Perhaps the most telling is the use of kampung as a marker of a particular kind of class identity, one that is both cause and consequence of these boundaries.

To say that one is a 'kampung' person is to suggest a lower-class socio-economic position, whether used by insider or outsider. Yet, when people inside these densely packed neighbourhoods use this term, it connotes familiarity and comfort with a particular style of life, one predicated on close observation of particular repertoires of behaviour. Kampung people are taken to be involved in one another's lives, whether as guardian of neighbourhood moral dictates or as collaborator in local schemes, for good or ill. Attendance at kampung life rite events and other community ritual events is expected. Sending money rather than providing communal labour at such events elaborates this set of behaviours. That is, to send money is to suggest a higher socio-economic standing, and while often understood as not sufficiently kampung, the people who can send envelopes of money also represent what is desired by many in the neighbourhood. This ambivalence between desire and suspicion of the wealthy is persistent in the kampung, serving again to mark incipient class boundaries.

The highly nuanced and subtle distinctions formed around the idea of kampung are evidence of the complexities of class, even as they illustrate how the positive affirmation of community membership by some can quickly become denigration by others. To call someone *wong kampung* (kampung person, Javanese) has a positive valence as insider, one of us, someone who understands what the kampung represents in a kind of resistance to normative middle-class respectability and pretensions. Yet to say *wong kampung-an* (person who acts like they are from the kampung), that is to say, a person with a kampung mentality, is to shift this discourse to the pejorative and the speaker to an outsider. A further contrast makes this clearer. Javanese colleagues noted that to be told: '*aja desani*' ('don't act like you are from the countryside', Javanese) carries the meaning of not acting too humble, too self-effacing, as a rural peasant might in the company of those with higher standing. The contrast between

rural and urban as embodying different values is clear when we contrast this humility with the effect of being told: '*jangan kampungan*' (Indonesian for 'don't act like a kampung person'). Here the connotation is of being rough, unrefined, not well-bred – *kasar*. Poverty and lower-class standing is implied in both examples, but the contrast between humble and vulgar is a key one. The use of these phrases, whether by kampung insider or outsider, effectively celebrates – as well as denigrates the countryside, while the urban poor are unambiguously described in negative terms.

In other words, kampung is a form of class consciousness, one that cuts two ways. While the word is used to register lower-class identity, kampung neighbours use it as a lash against those who fail to conform to kampung life, and against those whose class position is higher and therefore unmoored from the realities of kampung life. As such, kampung forms of distinction serve to mark the edges of the middle through conduct that simultaneously confirms class consciousness and registers a desire for the middle class. In many ways, kampung consciousness is fundamentally split: always looking forward to a modernizing urbanism while simultaneously gazing with nostalgia at a rural, village past.

Yet, the urban character of kampung is crucial here, even as these urban enclaves often blur the lines between rural traditional values and urban cosmopolitan ones. The New Order made good use of the village rhetoric to organize and govern these urban communities. As a consequence, the absorptive capacities of the kampung are not understood by kampung dwellers as a response to global demand for flexible labour, but instead as evidence of the still strong, rural Javanese values of sharing and mutual support. As I have described elsewhere (Newberry 2006, 2007; and see Breman 1980, 1988), the origins of the village imaginary are less important here than their continued reproduction through everyday social practices and their durability as New Order forms of governmentality. While it is true that rural Java also serves as a reserve of flexible and surplus labour, it is the urban kampung in its proximity to urban middle-class lives that lights up the divide between the lower class and the middle.

Kampung serve, then, not only as meaningful containers for particular types of economic activities, including those from which the state and the Indonesian economy derive great benefit, but also as a container for the domestic reproduction of particular forms of classed experience. Patterns of social engagement and particular repertoires of ritual and everyday experience reinforce membership even as they draw lines between inside and outside. This boundary-making is materialized in spatial practices that give material form to the kampung class. That is, kampung are not

only social formations but spatial ones as well. In some measure, kampung work as whole social universes whose boundaries are re-inscribed on a daily basis through shared forms of belief, practice and life.

In the following, the inculcation of some of the values associated with the kampung class through child-rearing will be considered to demonstrate the embodiment of kampung consciousness and how it relates to social mobility.

Diffuse and Enduring Forms of Respectful Embodiment

The year the *mobil* arrived, much of family life seemed oriented around admiring it. The improvement of the kampung house had included the addition of a deep, tiled front porch, a much-favoured aspect of kampung houses because it allows for catching cool breezes in the afternoon and monitoring the comings and goings of neighbours down the street. On one of my visits, Mas Hadi's family was at the house with their young son, Ari. I had brought a present for him, as I did for the other children of the family. Because he was so young, about four years old, he was extremely shy in front of me. Rather than leave the *mobil*, which was parked next to the porch and where he often sat in the driver's seat to watch the world through the windshield, Ari looked at me with fear and trepidation. Despite his deep desire for the toy I had bought, he was unable to come and greet me to receive it. That is, he refused to *salam*, which meant approaching me to respectfully take my hand and bring the back of it to his forehead. One constant refrain when around children is the command to *salam* when arriving and leaving respected older people. Young children frequently refuse if shy around the adult, and the repeated, often frantic-sounding urging to *salam*, *salam*, indicates that attaining this respectful form of embodiment is quite important.

Javanese comportment in the kampung still emphasizes refinement, and the desire to be *alus*, or refined, is one that has often been noted for the Javanese. *Alus* is typically opposed to *kasar*, or not refined and coarse, as kampung dwellers are often described. This idea of refinement has been supported by a complex nexus of values. For example, modes of bodily refinement have been understood as deriving from a Javanese court culture that emphasizes unruffled elegance and grace both in body posture and in the use of the Javanese language. Javanese has several levels that register relative social hierarchy so that speakers must make decisions about relative status in order to use the correct level in conversation

(Keeler 1984, 1987; Errington 1984). The higher the register, the more distant one is situated from the bump and tussle of social interaction and daily life. The sultan's demeanour is taken to be the epitome of refinement that emphasizes immobility, grace and inner reserve, although it is also the case that the higher one's status the less likely the need to conform to correct status.[5] That is, the sultan may act as he pleases, while his underlings do not have this freedom of movement.

Even so, some have suggested that the intricacies of learning the Javanese language and the aesthetics of Javanese power serve to distance ordinary men from their families. Their children learn to speak Javanese by using the higher registers for their fathers, implying less emotional closeness. And male potency is concentrated through denial of the material world by avoidance of mundane activities, such as dealing with money. Indeed, taking direct action is a sign of a lack of power and control (Ferzacca 2001). In effect, men are immobilized (Keeler 1987). Note here especially the opposition of male refinement with the gendered ideology of women as unable to attain the kind of aesthetic denial, inner resolve, and remove that are associated with male power. Nancy Smith-Hefner (1988) has noted the tendency for women to hypercorrect when using the Javanese language; that is, they tend to move up in register inappropriately. In fact, their mobility is a liability. Likewise, while their movement through markets as buyers and sellers demonstrates their instrumental efficacy, it is not an ideologically legitimate form of power (Brenner 1998; Peletz 1996; see also Keeler 1984; Smith-Hefner 1988). So the emphasis on refined bodily comportment serves to mark gendered and classed forms of embodiment, but perhaps in surprising ways.

The admonition to not 'act like a kampung person' was mentioned earlier. Attention to child socialization practices shows the key importance of modes of comportment and embodiment as a sign of being a good and moral person. Whatever the case with the royals, it is the upper middle class that is disregarding these forms, often dismissing them as evidence of a feudal past. Yet, in the kampung, these forms of bodily distinction are fully embraced and reproduced, as is evident in child socialization practices. The values of these forms of bodily comportment in the kampung

[5] Thanks to Chris Brown for prompting attention to this issue. Indeed, status is like kampung membership, a matter of looking up and down at once (see Keeler 1987 on relative status). And it is important to note that the kampung described here had a close relationship with the Yogykarta kraton and a history of serving as the residential quarter for *abdi dalem*, those servants of the sultan whose comportment must perforce be *alus* but who were (and are) quite poor.

serve as particular markers of class. To attain them and use them is desired by kampung inhabitants, perhaps to counter the view of outsiders. These forms are important to those who would improve their class position, whereas those whose class standing is assured can ignore them.

So young Ari and the other grandchildren were schooled in particular forms of 'registered' bodily behaviour, that is bodily performances that registered status, just as the levels of the Javanese language are based on recognizing status differences. These moments of educating Ari on the porch revealed other aspects of child-rearing. Ari was the youngest grandchild. Consequently, all eyes were trained on him. His refusal to leave the car resulted in a torrent of language directed at him, from mother and father, but also from uncles and aunts, and a variety of cousins. Indeed, for some time the energy of this large group of relatives was directed predominantly at convincing this young boy to leave the car and come greet me. This ongoing harangue was remarkable in several ways. First, this continual bantering, threatening and harassing were part of the normal mode of teasing the young to get them to comply. No physical action was taken, and instead a veritable sea of words surrounded him, urging him to think about the consequences, to consider his actions, to see that this was the wrong choice. He listened silently, and looked with longing at the toy and with terror at me, as the words continued.

The admiration of both the car and the child also serve as markers of class. Not only did the *mobil* make the family able to move around more freely, the approach to socializing the young Javanese child suggested a concern with middle-class markers of status. H. Geertz (1961; cf. Koentjaraningrat 1985) considered three values or principles as key parts of the socialization of children: *wedi*, *isin* and *sungkan*. The terms can be glossed as fear (*wedi*), shame (*isin*) and knowing one's status relative to another – a kind of humility (*sungkan*).[6]

In Hildred Geertz's analysis these values reflect the growing sophistication of the child's knowledge of social distinction. Experience in the kampung suggests a slightly different focus, but ultimately the same result: a finely tuned sense of position in social space, one that is as relevant to the kampung class as to the *priyayi* class (Errington 1984). Descriptions of people in the national language as *kurang malu* (not embarrassed enough)

[6] While *isin* and *wedi* are Javanese words, *sungkan* is an Indonesian word. In Yogya, *rikuh* or *pekewuh* would be used for *sungkan*. People use *sungkan* in East Java where Hildred Geertz conducted her research. This may account, in part, for the difference of opinion with Koentjaraningrat. My thanks to Nita Kariani Purwanti for pointing this out.

or *nggak tahu malu* (doesn't understand what it is to be embarrassed) were used for people who did not know their place. Translated into Indonesian for my benefit, I was instructed in some of these values as well. For example, a young neighbourhood boy who frequently played at my house was from a very humble background. His father was unknown, and his mother was alleged to be a prostitute. Because he was young and full of fun, he was often in my house, intrigued by the foreigner. It was after one of these occasions that my next-door neighbour told me that his behaviour was not *sesuai*, not fitting. I didn't fully understand at the time that what she meant was that he was not acting appropriately for his social station, which is to say, he was trying to move beyond the status he was meant to have. In other words, his mobility was restricted.

The development of a precise sense of social geographic sense is produced through another value that I saw in practice in kampung child socialization, one that is vitally important to understanding kampung class and its embodiment, and that is the value of learning to *ngalah*. As Keeler notes, the word 'is based on the root kalah ("to be defeated"), but the initial nasalization gives the word an active and intentional cast, so that it expresses the decision on the part of a stronger or more righteous party to yield voluntarily to another. To be able to ngalah is an ability much praised in Java' (Keeler 1987:62).[7] In practice, this value means that older children must learn to concede defeat to the younger; they must learn to recognize the greater vulnerability of younger children and learn to deny what they want themselves in favour of giving to younger family members. As one friend described it, to concede defeat, or *ngalah*, can actually mean to win in the sense of winning over one's desire and attaining maturity. The value of knowing defeat amplifies and reinforces the value of knowing one's social place and not to move beyond it.

Despite the shrinking family and delayed marriage, long-standing Javanese kinship, family and child socialization practices remain quite relevant in the kampung in my experience. Children are raised in households shot through with a network of kin from parents to grandparents to cousins, uncles and aunts. They are the centre of daily discourse and interaction, which subtly encourages them to know their place and to be aware of their social standing. As young Ari gazed at me from the safety and height of his perch in the front seat of the new *mobil*, he stood for many things: enduring patterns of kinship ties and socialization practices, but also the promise of a new mobility and a new class standing. In the next

[7] My thanks to Nita Kariani Purwanti and Gerry van Klinken for their notes on usage.

section, long-standing practices of child sharing and fosterage and their relevance in the kampung illustrate another form of mobility.

The Circulation of Children

The term *anak angkat* – literally lifted child – is often glossed as adoption. The term actually covers various forms of child circulation (cf. Leinaweaver 2008): from child sharing, to child borrowing, to fosterage. Formal adoption is said to be prohibited by Islamic law (Fachruddin 1985; Harahap 1993), although adoptions were reported to me under the name *anak pupon* (H. Geertz 1961 translated this as adopted child) to mean a formal legal adoption with the severing of ties to the biological family. In this section, these forms of circulation of children are considered in terms of class and the forms of labour flexibility noted above, illustrating again the play between mobility and fixity in social status.

Beatty (2002) makes an argument for Javanese foundational flexibility as a kind of cultural disposition, one that is evident in the practice of moving children between households. As he notes for a community in East Java, flexibility in patterns of adoption share much with patterns of divorce and religious conversion. They all derive, he suggests, from a common cultural scheme that emphasizes the ability to change places and perspectives. Indeed, there are a variety of practices in Java that serve to make children mobile and these practices appear to be long-standing. Boomgaard (1989, 2003) considers historical practices that include child sharing (following Henley 2003), adoption and slavery to be contingent on household labour needs. He notes a distinction between *anak pupon* and *anak angkat* made in late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Java. An *anak pupon* was adopted at an early age and subsequently regarded as a 'normal' child by the adopting parents. This child would receive a share of inheritance and could succeed the adoptive father as a shareholder in the communal rice field. In contrast, an *anak angkat* was a child brought into the household at a later age that might then work as a servant or farmhand. This child would not inherit. Boomgaard notes some ambiguity in the distinction between resident servants and farmhands and children adopted at a later stage. Over the period 1500–1900 'slavery shaded imperceptibly into adoption', particularly in parts of Sumatra (2003:208). The ambiguity in both cases derives from the blurry line that divides relations driven by affect from those driven by economic need. Schröder-Butterfill (2004) notes a similar dynamic in her contemporary case studies of child circulation to help with senior care in East Java. Those interviewed

for the present research also indicated that moving children between households produces a significant tension between love and attention (*kasih sayang dan perhatian*) and help with paying for school fees and other needs.

In Hildred Geertz's 1961 description, the circulation of children was less clearly about the socio-economic effects than the effects on the household by having a child in the house: to produce a birth, to provide an opportunity for parenting practice, to deal with loneliness. Yet, the term *anak angkat* commonly used in contemporary Java is clearly about class mobility, and the notion of lifting a child with its implication of obligation shading into economic advantage and redistribution are central to practices of child circulation in Java. In a series of interviews conducted in 2006 regarding the experience of being an *anak angkat*, it was clear that changes in biological families (due to marriage, divorce or death) were a key reason for the movement of children.[8] This movement was almost always towards a family that was more economically fortunate. Yet, one aspect of the mobility of children that was repeated in the interviews was movement back to the natal home. In other words, patterns of child movement suggest the circulation of children as markers of possibility, economic and emotional, as well as some of the obstacles to their circulation.

In one case from the interviews, three girls were circulated due to changes in their family of origin. As in all the cases here, this family was a lower-class urban one. These children had quite divergent experiences. It is the contrast between the eldest and the youngest that concerns us here. Their father, a military man, was married four times. Their biological mother was the first, and five children were produced in this marriage. The second wife was fat and very mean (*ibu gemuk yang sangat galak*), according to the oldest girl. The third wife was a Chinese woman who had two children of her own and who was not acknowledged (*tidak diakui*) by her family because of the marriage. Finally, the fourth wife produced a son.

The three girls were then 'lifted' by a friend of their father, another common way for children to move beyond family. The eldest child never felt accepted and sought to leave this new house as soon as she could. The youngest, who had no memory of the move, was a much-loved and

[8] Interviews for this research were conducted by Nita Kariani Purwanti between July and October 2006. Interviews were transcribed by Ms Kariani Purwanti along with a brief synopsis of the life story. The translation of these materials was done by the author. The author extends her heartfelt thanks to Ms Kariani Purwanti, a valued research colleague.

pampered child in the adopting family. The relationship between the two fathers is telling as to the classed dimensions of *anak angkat* relations. Both were military men, but the biological father was a lower-status junior officer in a patron–client relationship with the adoptive father. In Java, these hierarchical relationships are described in familial terms. The poorer, lower-status man is child to his senior officer (*anak buah*/ or, literally, fruit child). Many poor people in my acquaintance hope to become the *anak buah* of a powerful man, and thus derive the benefits (often economic) in exchange for loyalty (often political). The difference in status was evident when the younger daughter described her relationship with her biological father before she knew that she had been moved: 'At first I called my "real" father Uncle Raji, and he would talk to me in high Javanese.'[9] Her biological father's use of a honorific level of Javanese to speak to her would be unimaginable if not for her movement as a lifted child (see Beatty 2002). In this case the spoiled child, who was moved without, at first, knowing, was treated as a person of higher status than her own biological father. The 'lifting' represented by child movement is quite evident. And yet the story does not end there.

After the death of the adopting father, his fourth wife secured his property for her own child. The grown adoptive daughter went on to say: 'After my adoptive mother died and my adoptive father married again, all his wealth was dominated by [my] step mother, who was evil and greedy, I wasn't given a portion' [from the inheritance of the adopting family].[10] This outcome was described as the result of the lack of formal documentation of the transfer, a fact that reiterates the informal character of much of this child circulation. In this case, the youngest daughter returned to her natal home where she was granted inheritance by her 'uncle,' her biological father. Ultimately, both girls received inheritance from their biological father despite the fact that he was of a lower socio-economic status. The sisters now share a house given to them. The reversal of fortune represented by this case is quite remarkable.

The movement of children because of economic need was described again and again in interviews. When there were changes – a death, a remarriage – in the family, often children were moved as a result. In many of these cases, the movement was of a child back to an original home

[9] 'Dulu kalau memanggil ayah asli "Oom Raji", dulu ayah asli kalau berbicara denganku malah bahasa Jawa halus.'

[10] 'Setelah ibu angkat meninggal dunia dan ayah angkat menikah lagi semua harta ayah angkat dikuasai oleh ibu tiri yang jahat dan serakah, saya tidak diberi bagian.'

because of changing fortunes in the adopting family, that is, these movements were indeed circulation. What seems to be a persistent element in the circulation of children is the attempt to tap the resources available and/or implied in patron–client relations. That is, as suggested above, although lifted children are understood to benefit from their movement, in many ways it is their role as nodes in the networks of kinship and patronage that explain the prevalence of these patterns. Their circulation produces and reinforces pathways of exchange. The complicated nature of economic gain as against emotional relation was repeatedly mentioned in interviews. The continued mobility of children, moving as need be to avoid fate and to take advantage of resources, suggests that Beatty's notion of an embrace of different perspectives through socialization of children is true, yet to shear it of attention to class differentiation, as he suggests (2002), is a mistake.

Like the desire of the kampung class to move easily and freely beyond the confines of their lower-class urban neighbourhoods, the circulation of children is about a variety of forms of desire for the free movement through social space. But it is also about a clear attempt to move up the class hierarchy, as we saw in the case of the *mobil*. Yet, in many ways, this mobility does not represent a jump across a broad divide between haves and have-nots, but rather a kind of lateral, tactical move to open up and make use of rather small differences in social standing. Like the new mobility of the kampung class in terms of transportation and communication, attempts to move beyond are circumscribed by limits and obstacles that relate to embodied forms of distinction that derive in part from economic class and the structure of feeling that shapes it in urban kampung neighbourhoods.

Class Mobility and the Fixity of the Kampung Class

Flexibility, in the disposition of labour and in social status evident in patterns of child socialization and circulation, might be said to support and extend Beatty's proposal of a fundamental Javanese flexibility. But the cultural disposition proposed here is produced as a form of practical consciousness; one born of the structuring power of the reproduction of precarious and abundant labour to the great advantage of the Indonesian state and economy. This is no argument for the role of culture as a *sui generis* phenomenon, but rather an argument about the deep imbrication of culture and class. Referencing Raymond Williams's long revolution in

the structure of feeling, not to mention its relationship to state power (Corrigan and Sayer 1985), this approach to mobility appreciates not only its local valence, but also its powerful shaping by a global political economy and a national state.

Although the kampung class may desire a middle-class mobility and may circulate children as mobile tokens of economic opportunity and of pathways of exchange and obligation to achieve a kind of upward mobility, there is much that fixes this class in place, despite their efforts to move beyond. First, the flexibility of labour that serves the comparative advantage of Indonesia depends on the fixed labour of kampung women as national heroes of reproduction and domestic engineering, even after the end of the New Order. Their fixity through state-sponsored domesticity relies on a tightly circumscribed sphere of mobility, the kampung community, even as the unemployed and under-employed labour of others in the kampung is made absolutely mobile and flexible. These programmes, as well as the precarity of economic life for this class, are linked as well to the house-based micro-enterprise industries of the informal sector that sponge excess of labour in surplus-labour economies.

Yet, there is a real irony here in the forms of kampung flexibility and mobility in labour, in child sharing, in community welfare work: they are founded on the stable reproduction of the lower class. And this stability, this fixed location in the social space of Indonesia, is strangely reiterated, not only in forms of child socialization, but also in the circulation of children to take advantage of economic difference and in their ultimate return to where they began. As young Ari sits in the front seat of the family's new *mobil*, he seems the very epitome of the promise to move up to the middle. After all, his father and mother have moved to one of the new housing developments in the suburbs, and their new car allows for forms of urban mobility that were once denied them. At the same time, some forms of public transportation available to the urban poor are being undercut by recent changes, including the end of subsidies on petrol for motorbikes and the proliferation of cell phones and texting.[11] Yet, in truth, the mobility of the kampung class has long been limited. This is evident in the social value placed on knowing one's place. The socialization of kampung children illustrates the continuing importance of family, including aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents as well as parents, fifty years after Hildred Geertz's work. It also shows the continuing role of child-rearing

[11] Thanks to Fridus Steijlen for these notes on changes to public transportation.

that emphasizes the importance of respect, of embodied social subjectivity and forms of distinction, and of the importance of conceding defeat, *mengalah*, and knowing one's place. While forms of respectful embodiment might easily be denigrated as the feudal remains of Yogyakarta's colonial nostalgia for aristocratic privilege, the modes of child-rearing in the kampung derive more proximately from cultural practices that register a desire for middle-class status, even as they index forms of embodied distinction defined in the ongoing reproduction of these lower-class enclaves.

The circulation of children in urban kampung illustrates how local forms of embodiment serve to mediate class, and class-striving, in everyday life as against the state's advantage in the continued precarity of daily economic life.

PART TWO

THE STATE

Fig. 5. PONTIANAK: A young woman working in an electronics shop is eager to pose for the camera. Too late, she is chagrined to realize that her mop will undermine the sophisticated air she hoped to project.
June 2010: photo by S. Chris Brown

ETHNICITY AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORK ASPIRATIONS IN PONTIANAK

Wenty Marina Minza

One morning one of my research assistants in Pontianak showed me the morning paper. 'Look', she said in an anxious voice, pointing to the headline, 'the governor has just announced the heads of the provincial offices… all the second echelon people'.[1] I was puzzled; why was this so important? She patiently explained it to me. First, several posts in the list were considered lucrative. All civil servants receive money on top of their salary. It is usually known as 'side money' (*uang sampingan*), and departments that pay a lot are called 'wet' (*basah*). The offices for the regional civil-service bureau, public works, education and health are 'wet'. Side money can exceed the salary. Second, these appointments were ethnic. Resting her finger on the name of the new head of the West Kalimantan Regional Civil Service Bureau (Badan Kepegawaian Daerah Kalimantan Barat, responsible for recruitment), she added: 'See, it's a Dayak! Now that the governor is a Dayak, all of the important posts are held by the Dayak….Soon all the provincial civil servants will be Dayak.'[2] Of course that was just an assumption and perhaps a bit of an exaggeration, but the feeling that this ethnic map of the bureaucracy would affect my assistant's future turned out to be shared by many other young people in this town. The commotion led the governor to state in the local press that he had tried to balance the composition of his cabinet and that ethnicity did not matter in the recruitment process.[3] My Malay assistant did not believe it. To her it was obvious that more Dayak had been appointed than before.

My assistant, Lia, was a 24-year-old young Malay woman. That day she was wearing skinny jeans and a floral printed blouse. I noticed she had swapped her plain black-framed glasses for matching red ones. Attention to style is typical of young women in Pontianak. Lia had graduated in law

[1] 'Tengok Kak, baru jak gubernur ngumumkan kepala dinas propinsi, semue eselon dua.' Second echelon is the appropriate civil-service rank for new heads of provincial offices.

[2] 'Hah, Dayak agek! Sebab gubernur Dayak, semue posisi penting diambik same die (Dayak). Nantek pegawai propinsi pasti Dayak gak semue.'

[3] *Berkat*, 'Gubernur: tidak ada balas dendam,' 15 January 2008.

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from the local state university two years earlier, but had not managed to find 'decent' work. Her idea of decent work was to be a civil servant, a *pegawai negeri sipil*, or PNS. She had been applying desperately ever since she graduated – seven times to various regional and national offices, all without success. Where I come from in Java, a PNS job is not as major an aspiration among young people. I was surprised by her fixation on getting a PNS job. It made me wonder how typical Lia's obsession was among educated young people in Pontianak.

Pontianak is the provincial capital of West Kalimantan, located on one of the 'outer islands' of Indonesia. It has grown remarkably in recent years. In between the two-storey shop-houses known as *ruko* (short for *rumah toko*) and the spacious coffee shops (*warung kopi*) there are now entertainment facilities such as internet cafés, karaoke bars and billiard rooms. The trained eye – all Indonesians have them – will soon notice the Chinese faces on Pontianak's streets. Wherever you turn, you will see ethnic Chinese – walking along the streets, working in the *ruko,* selling as street vendors or simply relaxing at coffee shops. But this public scene contrasts with what I see in state offices, schools or health facilities. Ethnic Chinese are almost nowhere in sight. That is when I realized that space in Pontianak is ethnically segregated.

I was then introduced to a 25-year-old Chinese woman, Carla, a part-time clerk at a small Chinese-owned transportation company who was still trying to obtain her university diploma. When I met her at the office she was wearing a simple tight skirt, complemented by a white shirt. She told me that when hanging out in cafés or at the mall, she dresses in short pants and tank tops, with high heels – exactly what my Malay informants call the 'Chinese style' (*model cine*). When she finishes her study she dreams of moving up in a big, private company. With the money she earns, she hopes to travel the world, to Europe and Japan.

None of the Chinese I spoke with shared Lia's PNS aspiration. Like Lia, they wanted financial independence, but they also wanted self-development. Eny (19), a Chinese woman from Sekadau in the interior currently working with a company on a one-year contract, wanted eventually to have her own electronics store in Pontianak. She had no intention of applying for a PNS job. She feared that, if she was accepted, the government might send her back out to her hometown:

> When I finish university, there is no way I will go back to my hometown. We are human…we want to develop ourselves all the time, we are looking for new experiences. I am not that interested in working as a PNS.…Especially if

> I were assigned to a rural area, I would not be able to develop myself....We have to fit in if we are placed in a rural area.

Many other Chinese youths that I interviewed similarly stressed the importance of matching their future job with their educational background. Sometimes this might have been a cover for fear of failure, because they also assumed their chances of being accepted into the bureaucracy were minimal. Vanka (22), a Chinese woman who had come to Pontianak from a small village, told me: 'I heard that if you want to apply for a PNS, only natives (*putera daerah*) will be considered. Non-indigenous people (*non-pribumi*) like the Chinese will definitely be refused.'

The contrast between Chinese and non-Chinese youths' work aspirations became clear in a small survey I conducted (see Table 1, further discussed below).

My observations on what shapes youth work aspirations differ sharply from those of others. Arnett (2004) describes young people in the United States as eager to explore their work options before deciding. Exploring is

Table 1. Work aspiration by ethnicity.

		First choice			Total
		PNS	Business	Worker in private company	
Ethnicity	Malay	140	10	3	153
		91.5%	6.5%	2.0%	100.0%
	Dayak	34	8	2	44
		77.3%	18.2%	4.5%	100.0%
	Madurese	19	1	0	20
		95.0%	5.0%	.0%	100.0%
	Javanese	39	1	0	40
		97.5%	2.5%	.0%	100.0%
	Others	21	3	3	27
		77.8%	11.1%	11.1%	100.0%
	Chinese	2	30	13	45
		4.4%	66.7%	28.9%	100.0%
Total		255	53	21	329
		77.5%	16.1%	6.4%	100.0%

part of constructing their personal identity. Pontianak youth, by contrast, all seem to know what job they want without having to explore options. Educated non-Chinese are sure they want to enter the bureaucracy; most Chinese want to start their own business or at least work in a dynamic, challenging private company. Unlike Arnett's industrial-city western youth, educated youth in this provincial town in a developing country are not free to follow their own inclinations. Not individual capacity but various structural factors shape their work opportunities. As I tried to unravel what these factors might be, I faced three puzzles.

The first puzzle is this fixation on finding perhaps the most boring job in town. I could not get over my amazement at the number of non-Chinese youth in Pontianak – Malay, Dayak and Madurese – who wanted nothing more than to 'be a PNS'. Where was their need for self-actualization? Most PNS with whom I spoke did not find their job very interesting, and the image is that PNS actually do very little work.[4] When I came to one of the local offices at ten o'clock in the morning, the woman taking care of my administrative necessities chatted amiably about her 'busy' schedule outside the office. When she was finished with me, she walked towards her desk and said with a smile of satisfaction that it was time for games on the office computer. Soon she would leave to pick up her daughter from school. This is what Pontianak's educated indigenous young people aspire to – a job in the bureaucracy, any job at all, regardless of their educational background. Even those of my informants who said they wished to become a teacher emphasized it had to be as PNS. If they had to choose between becoming a teacher in a private institution and becoming a PNS in the bureaucracy, they would choose the latter.

A second and related puzzle arose from Lia's anxious exclamation, 'See, it's a Dayak!' Entering the bureaucracy was apparently not a matter of acquiring the right qualifications, but of being born into the right ethnic group. In the minds of these young people, 'getting in' was a competition that ran along the lines of ethnic patronage. This bureaucracy was a long way from the advanced, dispassionate organization that Weber (1968:956–1005) depicted. What kind of organization was it for Pontianak? To understand this would be to understand the source of the anxiety young Malay and Dayak graduate job seekers felt.

The third puzzle arises from the completely different aspirations, in the same town, among ethnic Chinese educated youth. They do not share the anxiety of ethnic competition in fulfilling their aspirations. Why is that so,

[4] *Berkat*, 'Makan gaji butak,' 10 January 2009.

and what does this tell us about the socialization process in an ethnically divided provincial town?

This chapter explores the process of growing up through the domain of work in an Indonesian provincial town. It focuses on university-educated youth in the provincial city of Pontianak. It begins by asking how non-Chinese youth justify their PNS aspirations, and aims to understand how limited chances, unfair competition and ethnic prejudice shape their dreams and anxieties in their quest for upward mobility. It finds that family is particularly important to them. Work aspirations are less about identity construction than about securing a livelihood that enables young people to fulfil family obligations.

To help solve the three puzzles, I will first describe how Pontianak's labour market has historically been shaped by ethnic relations.

Ethnic Work-Domains

An Australian colleague who heard me present a paper at a conference could hardly believe that provincial youth still found the bureaucracy so fascinating. 'It seems such a 1980s dream', she said. [5] But it is true. A young Malay man on campus, when I explained early in my research that I wanted to know what kind of job young graduates in Pontianak were after, replied: '*Mbak*, you don't need a year of research to answer that question! Everybody here knows that they all want to be a PNS.' The fierce competition to enter the civil service did not dampen his ambition. During the 2008 PNS recruitment in the new district of Kubu Raya, just outside Pontianak, for example, 8,083 applied for just 383 positions.[6] If in the big cities industries and the private sector increasingly provide young people with opportunities for decent, secure and fulfilling work, in a provincial town such as Pontianak educated non-Chinese have much less choice. Industry is limited, and the Chinese dominate private business. A 'decent' office job (*kerja kantoran*) for them comes only from the state.

Pontianak, with a population of just over half a million in 2008 (Pontianak Statistics Bureau 2008), is located at the mouth of three rivers: the Kapuas, the Small Kapuas and the Landak. Its strategic location made trade the basis of its growth. The rivers remain an important transportation route to and from the interior. The province of West Kalimantan lies

[5] Pam Nilan, at the conference 'Growing up in Indonesia: Experience and Diversity in Youth Transitions,' Conference, Canberra, Australia (29 to 31-10-2009).

[6] *Berkat*, '6710 Pelamar rebutkan 383 lowongan,' 20 December 2008.

in Borneo. Its four million inhabitants (Badan Pusat Statistik 2011) reside mostly near the coast. Agriculture, trade and the service sector make up most of the domestic product. The province is known for its fruit and expanding palm oil plantations. Rice production is limited when compared with Java (West Kalimantan Statistics Bureau 2010). In the past, logging drove the province's economy, but crackdowns on illegal logging bankrupted many major logging companies, increasing already high unemployment in the province.[7]

In Pontianak, most people work in the trade and the service sectors (the latter includes government); industry is not prominent. Numerous government offices extend from the west to the southern part of the city. The mayor's offices stand on the Kapuas river bank. The provincial government's offices are in the south, near the state university Tanjungpura and the Mega Mall. The new mall has become one of Pontianak's most visited entertainment centres. Pontianak's poor mostly live in the north, across the Kapuas River – mostly poor Chinese and Madurese working their market gardens. Several local, Chinese-owned rubber-drying sheds line the northern bank of the Kapuas, but they employ few workers. Some new national-level agribusiness companies have started hiring low-skilled female workers through job fairs facilitated by the local government.[8] The educated young dominate the town's statistics for the un- and underemployed (Pontianak Statistics Bureau 2008).

Ethnicity has always been important in West Kalimantan's social landscape (Prasojo 2011:52). The province's slogan is '*Harmonis dalam etnis*' (harmony in ethnic diversity). Four groups dominate provincial ethnic dynamics: the Malay (42%), Dayak (32%), Chinese (12%) and Madurese (5%). Other migrant groups include the Javanese, Bugis, Padang, Batak and Sundanese (Ridwan Rosdiawan, Hudi and Shaleh 2007:22). Transmigration programmes in the 1980s ensured there are more Javanese here than Madurese, yet they are considered to integrate better than the Madurese and are not prominent in ethnic tensions (Alqadrie 1990:62; Ridwan Rosdiawan, Hudi and Shaleh 2007:23). In Pontianak, Chinese at about one third make up the largest group. They are followed by Malay (a quarter), and then the Bugis, Javanese, Madurese and others. Whereas Dayak are the majority in the province's interior, only a small number of Dayak live in Pontianak (Ridwan Rosdiawan, Hudi and Shaleh 2007:26).

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[7] *Berkat*, 'Pekerja Kayu Kembali Demo ke Kantor Bupati,' 6 December 2008.
[8] *Tribun Pontianak,* 'Perusahaan Batam buka di Pontianak,' 18 October 2008.

Apart from the Chinese, the other groups are predominantly Muslim, so that Islam is Pontianak's majority religion.[9]

Ethnic and familial networks shape employment patterns to an important degree in West Kalimantan (Van Klinken 2003:22–3). Malays dominate the civil service, but many Malays are also involved in farming and petty trade; Dayak are farmers, petty traders and also teachers; and Madurese work in informal sectors such as transport (pedicabs, small ferries, taxis) and petty trade (fruit, vegetables and street-side food). The Chinese are the dominant players in retail and wholesale trade and in services, often employing non-Chinese as workers. In urban Pontianak, many Malays also work in petty trade and small restaurants (*warung makan*). Only a few Dayak occupy middle-level civil service positions (Achwan et al. 2005).

Riwanto Tirtosudarmo (2002:4) writes that West Kalimantan's is a 'history of migration, or in other words, a history of interaction between migrants and the local people (or those who had arrived earlier) in this area'. The Dayak and Malay are considered the 'original' ethnic groups, while the Chinese and Madurese are migrants. Arab immigrants in the 1700s established what would be known as 'Malay' sultanates, located on the coastal areas (Pemerintah Kota Pontianak 2009). The Kadariah sultanate in Pontianak was one of the more prominent ones. Dayak who embraced Islam were considered Malay; indeed, Muslims from other ethnic groups are also often considered Malay, with the exception of the Madurese. Some Dayak later moved to the interior (Adri 2007).

The Dutch arrived seven years after the establishment of the Kadariah Sultanate (Pemerintah Kota Pontianak 2009).The Christian mission penetrated the interior in the late nineteenth century, and most Dayak converted in the twentieth. Unlike the Dayak Muslims, Dayak Christians maintained their ethnic identity. They constructed an ethno-religious identity that paralleled Dayak culture with Christianity (Ridwan Rosdiawan, Hudi and Shaleh 2007:22–3). The Malay sultanates cooperated with the Dutch and provided access to resources (including land), but the sultans also got military protection from rivals (Van Goor 1986). The Dutch–Malay partnership gave Malays prestige. The Dutch used them to colonize the area through indirect rule (Siahaan 1974:32). The partnership further marginalized the Dayak, who had already been positioned as *ulun*, or slaves of the sultans (Tangkilisan 2005).

[9] *Sejarah Melayu: Kesultanan Kadariah.* http://history.melayuonline.com/?a=bU5WL29QTS9VenVwRnRCb20%3D= (accessed 25 February 2008).

The Chinese first came to the northern part of West Kalimantan early in the nineteenth century as farmers (Heidhuis 2003:27; Siahaan 1974:20). The discovery of gold encouraged more to come. To protect their economic interests, the Chinese established their own mutual-aid organizations, called *kongsi*, which facilitated the accumulation of capital and the reproduction of Chinese cultural practices. These strategic steps later facilitated Chinese domination in trade, though some remain farmers today (Siahaan 1974:23–5). Most Chinese are Buddhist or Confucian.

The Madurese, from the island of Madura off East Java, first came to West Kalimantan as low-skilled workers for the Malays, beginning in the early twentieth century (Hendro Suroyo Sudagung 2001:93). The flow increased in the 1920s and 1930s as the Dutch built new roads and towns (De Jonge and Nooteboom 2006:258). The Madurese are Muslims, but retain a separate identity from the Malays.

Ethnic stereotypes are rife. Malays are said to be Islamic, educated, urbanized and of higher social status than the Dayak, who are Christian and rural. Chinese are said to be exclusive and wealthy, while the Madurese are seen as poor, uneducated, violent and strongly attached to religious leaders from Madura. In reality not all Chinese are rich (Sikwan and Triastuti 2004). In recent years many Dayak Muslims are refusing the Malay identity and calling themselves Muslim Dayak (Alqadrie 2002:6).

These ethno-religious identities are intensely politicized and have led to a series of bloody ethnic conflicts. The conflicts of 1997, 1999 and 2001 pitted Dayak and Malay versus Madurese and occurred around the moment of decentralization (Davidson 2008; Wawa 2000; Prasojo 2011:51). All my informants' anxieties, and their hopes of upward social mobility in an era of changing ethnic relations, can be traced back to these episodes.

The ethnicized employment market in this provincial town leaves few options for educated non-Chinese young people besides the PNS job. How do the young people themselves justify their choice of work aspiration based on these perceived opportunities? I conducted 106 in-depth interviews with university-educated youth, as well as a small survey among university students (N=369) to answer that question. Some of my in-depth interview respondents were drawn from the survey. The students were randomly chosen. I went to four universities and distributed the questionnaire in some of the classes. All students in the selected classes filled out the questionnaire. The research team made sure that the students answered all the questions, to minimize missing or ambiguous answers. The survey population proportions are: Malay 44%, Dayak 14%,

Madurese 7%, Chinese 15%, Javanese 14% and others (including Bugis, Batak and Minang) 8%. Of the respondents, 55% were male. The four universities were: Tanjungpura University, STAIN, STKIP and STMIK Widya Dharma.[10] In Pontianak, even the universities are ethnically stereotyped. I chose mine for that reason: Tanjungpura University is associated with Malays, STAIN with Madurese, STKIP with Dayak and STMIK with Chinese.

Puzzle 1: Why Become a PNS?

Many non-Chinese youths of lower-middle-class backgrounds consider PNS a form of upward mobility. The bureaucracy is accessible to them, promises a stable income and status, and allows them to fulfil family obligations. The stability outweighs the size of the salary, which is often not very high. Low PNS salaries are a stock item in local media. One story in *Berkat* starts with two PNS at a *warung kopi.* Asked how he is doing, one says: 'You ask how I am doing? It's like you've just known me. Everyday we go to this *warung kopi* and you still ask how I'm doing? This is how life has always been for us PNS. I only have money on the first day of every month. Even that won't last long, cut to pay back loans…'. The other replies, 'You and I share the same fate. My salary is also always cut. It gives me a headache…even if there is a rise, it won't solve our problems as a lower-echelon PNS'.[11]

In reality, however, 'side money' can exceed their salary. This includes gifts, often of dubious legality, from personal or corporate clients for support with government projects. The steady income also creates access to credit schemes, for example, to buy a motorcycle. Lian (27), a Malay young man, told me: 'You know how important a motorcycle is to get to places here. That is why people are competing to enter the PNS.' A mortgage on a house is also very popular; in fact, it is so popular that housing was excluded from a city regulation of March 2009 banning PNS credit

[10] Tanjungpura is the main state university in the province. STAIN (Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri) is a state higher-education institution that places Islamic teachings in its core curriculum. STKIP (Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan) is a private higher-education institution, focusing on training future teachers, while STMIK (Sekolah Tinggi Management dan Informasi Komputer) is a private higher-education institution mainly teaching management and computer science.

[11] *Berkat*, 'Jangan nak berutang', 24 February 2009.

applications requiring instalments of more than 40% of the monthly salary![12]

The pension, while small, guarantees lifetime security in a country that is for most people not a welfare state. And it goes on giving – the pension of a deceased PNS goes to the surviving spouse. Tina (24), a Dayak young woman, is the daughter of a deceased police officer. She told me:

> During good or bad times we still have money. If you're a businessman, you get millions of rupiah, but you don't know the future…if you're a PNS, even when you're retired, you have money for your children to eat. Even though my father has passed away, I still enjoy the benefits from his pension. I want that for my children, I want to become a PNS.

A pension is also a buffer against stigmatization in old age. A Madurese young woman, Wati (28), told me it would protect her from the shame of having to go into one of the free retirement homes subsidized by the Ministry of Social Affairs: 'If I cannot get a job in the civil service, then who will take care of me when I can no longer work? I would probably live in a retirement home (*panti jompo*). People would pity me. I don't want that.'

The stability, opportunity (side money and credit schemes) and security of the PNS job contrasts with the low, unstable income and uncertain future for those in the lower class in Pontianak working in the informal sector, such as small shops. Formal-sector alternatives for non-Chinese youth are usually low-end service jobs such as sales promotion or checkout girl at the mall, or waitress in a global restaurant chain. These jobs may bring a stable income, but the pay is low and the contracts uncertain. All this gives the PNS status, as Aas, a 26-year-old Malay young man, told me: 'The motivation to join the PNS is to acquire a good social position (*kedudukan sosial*).'

Many non-Chinese aspirant PNS emphasized the importance of societal recognition, especially within their own ethnic group. Wearing a PNS uniform is the public symbol of success. This was mentioned by Wawan (30), an unemployed Malay young man who graduated from the Faculty of Forestry in 2008.

> I would say the bottom line is this…I prefer a job as a PNS. If I am a PNS, in the eyes of society, I will have status. If I am not a PNS, then I have less status, unless I am really successful at what I do. My family will also have status,

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[12] *Berkat*, 'Larang pegawai pinjaman uang: potongan gaji di atas 40 persen,' 31 March 2009.

> because here, if one is successful, the family is also successful in society. And people notice that when one wears the uniform.

The uniform as status symbol is carefully guarded, as evidenced by a media debate on whether temporary civil servants (*honor*) should be permitted to wear it.[13] The mayor recently decided the answer was 'no'. When I showed Nia (24), a Malay young woman, the mayor's new policy of limiting the uniform to permanent PNS, she agreed that *honor* were threatening to deflate its value:

> I often meet my friend, riding her motorcycle, when I am on my way home. I have always thought it was all right. She is a temporary worker (*honor*), but she wears the brown uniform. Yes, really she wears a uniform. Maybe the policy is still new. That is why she is in the uniform, even though she is actually not allowed to wear the uniform yet.

We were having lunch at a small canteen in front of a government office. I asked her what was so important about the uniform. She replied: 'Look around, see those PNS in that corner? Many of the PNS come here to eat. We feel, I don't know (*gimana gitu* – indicating reluctance) when we see them. They are so confident, and proud in their uniform. They know everyone knows they are a PNS.' The uniform is a symbol of power. As access to it is further restricted, its value only rises.

Unlike the uniform, the free use of state motorcycles, cars and houses is only available to PNS of a certain position. Dino (21), a Malay man, told me this was the reason why he wanted one day to become head of a local office:

> I want to be a *kepala dinas* (head of office). They have access to office cars, sometimes houses (*rumah dinas*). Everyone will know one's position if they stay in a *rumah dinas*. I think that is achievable. If a person obtains a bachelor's degree, he will be at level III (*golongan* III). It is easier to climb up the career ladder from there.

Whether through credit or as a state facility, a 'proper' house is the ultimate goal. Pontianak's peaty soil is unsuitable for anything but timber houses on stilts, but a proper house has brick walls and a tile floor, as in Java. The added expense of deep foundations is part of the prestige. A car comes a close second. Lanny (24), a Dayak young woman, says:

> For us, success is…success is about achievement, like from the material domain…a house, having a car, or a new car. People will judge us, people are considered a success if they can obtain a house and a car. Usually it is those

[13] *Berkat*, 'Pemkot tertibkan pegawai "titipan"', 27 March 2009.

> in the civil service who are able to afford a house and a car. I don't know what kind of effort is put in to obtain the money to buy those goods, I don't know. But that is how people see success, from large observable material wealth. With a car, you can also show your success in public more than with a house.

A more intimate form of symbolic power is the opportunity to fulfil social obligations to the family. This is often viewed as the key to achieving 'adult' status. A regular income allows the dutiful child to assume the responsibility of assisting their parents. In the West, responsibility is often thought of as referring to oneself (Arnett 1998). But in Pontianak, as in district towns in India (Seiter 2009), youths do not see responsibility as limited to oneself. Adulthood is achieved when one is able to extend responsibility towards others – especially to parents and the wider family.

Financial responsibility can also enhance their bargaining power in the family. Hendar (22), a Malay man, explains:

> I need a job to earn money, to help the family and for myself…but more importantly for my family, that is more important….That is why I want a PNS job. Recognition from my parents, my older brother – but especially from parents – is important…I have more say in decision making in the family if I can support the family each month.

Most of the youths I interviewed are from lower-middle-class families. Their parents are usually teachers, low-ranking bureaucrats or owners of small businesses. A minority are from lower-class families whose parents work as farmers, plantation workers or workers in small businesses. These youths usually will not inherit a house. Credit schemes for housing allow them to become independent adults. The non-Chinese young people I met in Pontianak took an amazingly long-term view of their family responsibilities. Only when they have their PNS status and can see that their future family is safe will they feel confident enough to 'move on' and think about marriage. Owning a house, after marriage, is the start of a new mode of relating to parents. Agus (24), a young Malay man, explained:

> If married people still live with their parents it does not mean that they are less of an adult than those who live independently….Maybe they need a temporary place (*numpang dulu*), because people start a new life from zero….But a PNS can have a house through credit. They don't have to wait too long to save money for a house. The PNS can become independent sooner.

A house facilitates independent decision-making and lessens the parents' burden. Mimi (25), a young Dayak woman, said:

> If we are away from our parents, we become an adult faster. Because when we are with our parents, every time it is '*emak-emak* (mom, mom), *pak, pak* (dad, dad), *mak*, I can't do this, I can't do that.' When we're alone, like when we have our own place, we have to try to solve our own problems.

Clearly class origins tell us a lot more than merely not inheriting a house. They tell us something about values, such as the commitment to family. It also shapes attitudes towards the future, including the anxiety about secure incomes and perhaps, too, the lack of imagination about a world beyond their own family circle. These values come from their parents. Borjas (1992) used the term 'ethnic capital' to show the importance of parental inputs and ethnic environment in youth chances for upward mobility. Work aspirations are formed through values that run through the family in certain ethnic subcultures. And of course the opportunities are structured ethnically. Non-Chinese parents are especially likely to idealize the PNS job if they themselves experienced insecurity. Bu El is a 50-year-old Malay mother of four. Her eldest daughter has just graduated from university and is looking for work. She has two other children still at university. She says: 'I imagine my children when they have finished university. If she is a PNS, it is a full success (*sukses penuh*).' Her father had a job as a low-skilled worker with a private company with decent pay. But when she was in junior high, he was fired and the family's finances collapsed. The fall from prosperity to poverty was traumatizing. She says: 'That is why I expect my children to become a PNS.'

Even though a pension does not directly involve parents' self interest, it is very much part of the parental plan for their children. I met a 65-year-old Malay man, Pak Alip, a retired PNS teacher with three grown children – all PNS. When Pak Alip heard that during my fieldwork I was teaching at a private university in Pontianak, he asked, 'Then you are not a PNS? Then you don't get a pension, right?' I agreed, and asked him why pension was so important to him. He replied, 'I have two daughters in the PNS, and my son is also in the PNS. I am a lucky man, I know that my grandchildren will be secure. That is why pension is important.'

The uniform of one member in the family is a sign that the whole family has 'connections'. Arjan, a 30 year-old Madurese man, said:

> If we wear a uniform, the whole family will be proud. Other people will know that someone in the family is a PNS…they know that we can perhaps help in this and that, like giving information and stuff. Just as I was offered to enter the PNS by another PNS. People know that a PNS can do all that.

Even a low-ranking PNS has the power to negotiate placement in the PNS recruitment process, provided they have a good relationship with a

higher-ranked bureaucrat. People who offer this service are known as *calo* (middle man). During my fieldwork, the newly formed district of Kubu Raya started a PNS recruitment process. The number of *calo* produced a storm of bribery allegations. First, there was the wife of a district parliamentarian and her sister. They recruited a go-between who then searched for interested applicants. The go-between set up the connection, for which the two sisters would give him a small amount of money (Rp 100,000–200,000). After that, this go-between would carry the applicants' much higher fees to the two sisters. The amount depended on the salary a successful applicant could expect to earn. A high-school graduate pays at least Rp 40 million (US$ 4,000) to enter the police force. 'The go-between admitted to the police that he had given a total of Rp 750 million to the two sisters'.[14] The police got busy, more *calo* were arrested, and that particular recruitment process was annulled in its entirety. Since then people have become more cautious, but no one believes these practices have disappeared. Bu Idah is a PNS, teaching elementary school. Her husband wants to save up a special fund for when their son finishes university. Through her friends she has acquired a map of middle men they can approach.

The downside to this system of connections is that it excludes many who might otherwise be well qualified to enter the public service. Dea (25), a Dayak woman whose father is a teacher, says hesitatingly:

> I didn't think of the PNS as my work aspiration, well not that much. But I wouldn't refuse if I were accepted, I would be happy. My parents say that they can seek help from my father's friend. But his friend's position is not strong. The position will probably go to someone else with a stronger connection.

Bernadus, a young Dayak man whose parents are farmers, wrote 'starting my own business' as his first work aspiration choice in my questionnaire. But when I interviewed him, he told me he actually wanted to enter the police force, but had not been accepted. He did not tell me how good his school results were, but he himself blamed a lack of connections, a result of his parents' occupation:

> Most of my friends get into the police force using money. I hate that, I hate those kinds of policemen….But I really, really want to be a policeman… when I applied after high school, I did not use any connections (*orang dalam*). Connections…who? I don't have any. Even if I had one, I would need

[14] *Berkat*, 'Penipuan calo CPNS', 17 November 2008.

> to prepare a lot of money, *mbak*. 40 million, 50 million, 60 million rupiah. Do you think I am capable of providing that kind of money?

This also shows that an even higher percentage of young people, especially those from the lower class, may aspire to the PNS job than stated in the result of my small survey.

Puzzle 2: Why the Fear? Ethnic Bosses and the Bureaucracy

The handover of various powers from the central to the local government has triggered many local power struggles. In some areas local ethnicity has become an important condition for attaining certain powerful positions, in order to counter a perceived history of Javanese domination. The Malay and the Dayak in West Kalimantan are considered 'sons of the soil' (*putera daerah*) with special rights. But *putera daerah* are not united. *Pemekaran,* the establishment of new districts by sub-dividing old districts, is an opportunity to 'officially' claim ethnic territories. The power struggle is mainly about civil-service positions. Combined with a strong patronage system and the manipulation of rules by ethnic elites, the competition has significantly strengthened primordial ties.[15] As West Kalimantan continues to urbanize by migration from the countryside, despite a weak labour market, non-Chinese young people find themselves in a highly ethnicized competition for bureaucratic jobs. During a graduation ceremony at the Widya Dharma University, I sat next to a proud Dayak mother. She told me that the current governor, Cornelis, a Dayak, had made Dayak needs his priority. New roads into the interior had made it easier for young Dayak to come to the city for their education. She felt Cornelis was reversing the historic marginalization of the interior that had been the Dayak fate since colonial times (Peluso and Harwell 2001:84; Peluso 2009:50; Davidson, 2003:9; Eilenberg and Wadley 2009:61–2; Van Klinken 2008:37; Bamba 2004:70). Oren (23), a Dayak young man studying in a university in Pontianak, told me:

> The governor is now Dayak, the head of district in the interior happens to be Dayak, so there is a kind of policy to recruit Dayak people with potential, those who found it difficult to get into the civil service in the past now easily get in.... There still needs to be more effort to bring them in. Even if they are a bit unfit, efforts should be made to get them certain positions that fit their capabilities....Why not? Why is it like that nowadays? Because before it was very difficult.

[15] *Berkat*, 'Penerimaan CPNS jangan sampai ada titipan', 18 December 2008.

Dayak optimism about seizing access to bureaucratic jobs through *pemekaran* is producing anxiety among Malays like Lia. Some hope against hope that the bureaucracy is not a finite resource. Artha (25), a young Malay man, says: 'There is no change (in how Malays think of their chances of getting into the PNS). It is still like before, even though we know that there is more Dayak power.' This might be true at city or district level, but unfortunately jobs at the provincial level are a zero-sum game. Madurese share the growing Malay pessimism about their chances of getting into the PNS. For them, though, the issue is even more discouraging. Their general lack of education has left them with insufficient social networks in the bureaucracy. Even having a Madurese as deputy mayor of Pontianak will be of little help. Aziz (24), a Madurese young man, says: 'There are only around five Madurese who have a master's degree, and now a deputy mayor. But I am not sure he will be able to help that much. Not because he doesn't want to – the Madurese are just not strong enough.' Aziz's pessimism about his chances did not prevent him from believing that a PNS job is the only ticket to upward mobility. His statement reflects Pontianak's common discourse on ethnic jobism in the local bureaucracy, as expressed by Lia in the opening quote. The more elites of a particular ethnic group hold important positions, the stronger they are in providing access to people of their own ethnic circle to jobs in the bureaucracy.

To make things more complicated for educated young Malay men expecting to follow in the bureaucratic footsteps of their fathers, more and more women are now entering the PNS workforce. My small survey indicates there is no gender difference in work aspirations among non-Chinese young people in Pontianak. Both men and women aspire to becoming a PNS. A local newspaper carried a Malay op-ed about this as follows:

> It cannot be denied that being a civil servant is one of the most desired jobs. Society thinks that a person is not successful before he/she becomes a civil servant. Unemployment is associated with men....Many jobs men are entitled to have been taken away by women, because intellectually, women are better performers. In terms of honesty, neatness and conformity, women outperform men....It would be logical and just to have an 80:20 proportion in the recruitment of civil servant jobs (80 for men, 20 for women).[16]

The Malay young man who wrote this piece recognized women's superiority in work performance (not without some stereotypes), yet his call for

[16] *Pontianak Post*, 'PNS laki-laki lebih prioritas', 10 January 2008.

affirmative action on behalf of men illustrates how highly Malay young men value the PNS job. In 2007, 60% of PNS positions in the Pontianak Government office were held by women (Pontianak Statistics Bureau 2008). This contradicts non-Chinese society's expectation that men are the breadwinner in the family, and also underlines once more the scarcity of breadwinning opportunities through the state. While some Malay young men feel threatened by this form of women's emancipation, young women, not surprisingly, see it as an opportunity to increase their bargaining position vis-à-vis men. This includes increased autonomy in choosing their future spouse, as seen in the case below.

Tiwi (24) is a Malay young woman who just graduated from a university in Java. She had a boyfriend whom she had been seeing for five years. Her boyfriend was still struggling to finish his undergraduate thesis. This would not have become a problem were it not for the fact that Tiwi was accepted as a PNS in up-country Sintang in January 2009. Then everything changed. 'Why do I feel sick (*ill-feel*) of my boyfriend?' Tiwi asked me rhetorically one day when she visited my 'office'. The appointment forced her to rethink her relationship with her boyfriend. She felt she now had a good and stable job, while her boyfriend was going nowhere (*ndak kemane mane*). Later on, she did break up with her boyfriend, and formed a new relationship with another young man.

The aspirations of the non-Chinese educated young people in Pontianak might be representative of a lower-middle class that dominates the bureaucratic politics of the city. Many of the youth in the small survey (30%, all non-Chinese) have at least one PNS parent, mostly lower-echelon bureaucrats or teachers. This fits the lower-middle- class picture of the Indonesian provincial town also described by Evers and Gerke (1994). Unlike the middle-class youth in developing countries described by Arnett in his further writing (2005:28–9), who enjoy a long transition to adulthood accompanied by identity exploration, these lower-middle-class Pontianak youth do not explore their options. They are more like the youth in China described by Nelson and Chen (2007:87–8), who also have very limited opportunities to explore work options, due to a lack of educational opportunities and a declining labour market.

Puzzle 3: Chinese are Different: Socialization into an Ethnic Subculture

The dynamics of ethnicity, gender and class that structure young people's work aspirations come to them through their families. Both non-Chinese and Chinese youth told me that pleasing their parents was important

when making their choices. The non-Chinese youths seemed to be less autonomous than the Chinese in this regard. When friction occurs between parents' wishes and children's plans, Chinese youth express more freedom to take their own path. For instance, Hutomo (25) is a Chinese young man from the northern district of Singkawang who is now a PNS. He was the only Chinese PNS I met during my research. His parents were not pleased with his decision to enter the PNS, but they gave him enough freedom to make his own decision and face its consequences.

> My parents wanted me to have my own business. But it is impossible for parents to force their wishes upon their children. I will take any job offer that comes. My parents told me whatever I choose, just go along with it. Actually, it is based on self-awareness that I chose this path, and I will face the consequences. Since I was little, my parents told us things like that. Like if we want to open a business, if we become bankrupt, that that is our own responsibility. My parents really emphasized that.

Hutomo admitted that being a PNS had not been his dream. It was just one of several work options. Before entering the PNS, Hutomo worked in a private company for four years. However, he did not earn enough money to save. So he quit, and started applying for other work. Out of all the work applications he sent, this one passed. He was not overwhelmed with his acceptance in the PNS, but he was thankful that his current income of Rp 1,400,000 was enough to save some money. Being a Chinese PNS was also something he was proud of, because he made it there on his own. He compared the experience favourably to his previous acceptance in private companies, where he had to rely on his Chinese networks.

On the other hand, most non-Chinese youth tend to submit to their parents' expectations. Those that do not, seem to feel guilty. Kaka (34) is a Malay young man working as an NGO activist, involved in community development. He felt he was living his dream, because he had always wanted to work with the local community. But he still feels guilty for not fulfilling his parents' expectations of joining the PNS.

> When I started university, I was the only one in the family to go to university and escape life in the harbour. My father said that I had to become a PNS. There was conflict between us. Even though I like my NGO work, until now I still regret that I did not enter the PNS. I really regret not following what my deceased father expected of me. I was unable to make him happy.

This shows that work aspirations are not always related to self-fulfilment in the Arnett sense of developing one's personal identity. Self-fulfilment for these lower-middle-class non-Chinese youth is about forming work aspirations that are in line with their parents' wishes.

Siahaan (1974:41–3) shows that the ethnic Chinese population in West Kalimantan increased markedly over the 65 years between 1905 and 1970. Until the 1970s, most Chinese in West Kalimantan formally remained foreign citizens. The New Order's anti-Chinese discrimination resulted in costly naturalization processes that poor Chinese could not afford. This forced them to find ways to survive outside the state's domain. Recently, the reform era has opened more space for the Chinese to fully practise their citizenship, including suffrage,[17] and improved access to state tertiary-education institutions, while still retaining their religious beliefs. There is also more space for the Chinese to reach political positions and become state elites. For instance, the deputy governor of West Kalimantan is an ethnic Chinese. All these changes affect young Chinese people's beliefs in the opportunity to enter the bureaucracy. However, parental expectations and memories of New Order anti-Chinese discrimination are strong. One common justification for preferring to work outside the state domain is the 'self-generating pension scheme' in the private sector. Trade produces higher savings than the paltry PNS pension schemes. Many Chinese own a *ruko* in the centre of the city, along Gadjah Mada and Tanjungpura streets, selling foodstuffs, electronics or Chinese herbal medicine. Chinese traders also sell essential foodstuffs, fruit and traditional cakes in traditional markets. The Chinese dominate the foodstuffs trade. Effective distribution chains and a strong capital base allows the Chinese to sell at lower prices. They also dominate service sectors such as hotels, restaurants and travel agencies. Small businesses usually hire Chinese helpers, while larger ones recruit both Chinese and non-Chinese workers. Dylna (19), a young Chinese woman, explained:

> Chinese parents are proud of trade. Very few will wish for their children to become a PNS. PNS retire at 55, but in trade, no matter how old you are, you can always run your business. PNS salaries are also too low. If you are a PNS you only get a salary of 1 million rupiah. It is better to trade, because when we are old, we never know what illness we will have. And with only 1 million, what will we eat?

Unlike the non-Chinese youth who do not prioritize matching educational background and work when applying for the PNS, Ipin (20), a Chinese young man who is currently studying information technology at university, states that a match between educational background and work is a must if he were to apply for a PNS job.

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[17] *Berkat*, 'SBY ajak Tionghwa gunakan hak politik', 2 February 2009.

> If there is an opening for a PNS position that is in accordance with my major, I will then apply to become a PNS. But my intention of becoming a PNS is only 20%. The rest (80%), I want to have my own business or work in a private company, but only if I can have a high position.

Conclusion

Developmental psychologists have proposed that identity exploration in work is an essential stage towards constructing a healthy identity (Manning 2002; Arnett 2004). However, this offers a limited explanation for understanding young people's work aspirations in a Third World provincial town setting. This chapter highlights the experience of educated young people's transition to work in a provincial town in a developing country. Work aspirations in the process of education-to-work transitions are framed by structural opportunities rather than by individual choice.

The influential role of external structure in young people's work aspirations is not a monopoly of young people in provincial towns. In many rural and bigger cities of developing countries, class and ethnicity are often equally influential in shaping young people's work opportunities and aspirations (Seiter 2009:58; Arnett 2005:28; Jeffrey, Jeffery and Jeffery 2008). However, in provincial towns such as Pontianak, the influence of ethnicity among the lower-middle-class youth seems to be strong in shaping their work aspirations. Class is (among others) indicated by the occupation of the youngsters' parents. Most parents of the non-Chinese youth in my sample are teachers and lower-level civil servants, who see their chances of social mobility exclusively through accessing the civil service. In constructing their work aspirations, they prioritize how work will help them meet family obligations rather than individual ambitions.

There are historical and political reasons for the popular view that social mobility is only possible through the state. Ethnic mobilization, combined with systems of bribery and connections, have created new opportunities for non-Chinese youth in various categories to enter the bureaucracy. At the same, this system of ethnic patronage has created new obstacles for those without access to these resources. The resulting competition has created anxieties for educated young people, because alternative work domains, such as industry, are very limited. Feminization of the work force in the state domain creates further anxieties among young men.

On the other hand, the Chinese middle-class youth are similar to Arnett's emerging adults, who grow up through individual exploration

and who focus on self-development. Mostly confined to the trade sector, values of initiative and self-deployment are much more prevalent among these youth. In general they are also from wealthier families, thus having more options in their life. The almost completely separate socialization of youth within the same town of Pontianak, down to different clothing styles and language, is one of the significant discoveries of this chapter.

Fig. 6 TERNATE: Dock bosses spend much of the day (and night) at the central pier playing dominos for money, petty sums per point which can nevertheless add up to a tidy amount. Even though gambling is illegal, local police frequently join in the action. Meanwhile, more junior members of the dock gang are allocated actual loading and unloading of boats, from which the bosses reserve a cut. June 2010: photo by S. Chris Brown

RESISTING REFORMS: THE PERSISTENCE OF PATRIMONIALISM IN PEKALONGAN'S CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

Amalinda Savirani

Introduction

After the fall of President Suharto and the concomitant economic crisis in 1998, international agencies such as the IMF and the World Bank pressured Indonesia to reform its economy. The control of nepotistic networks over important sectors of the economy had created a form of 'crony capitalism' (Yoshihara 1988) that, it was argued, was hampering Indonesia's competitiveness. Alongside various democratic reforms, Indonesia adopted measures intended to free its economy from the influence of cliques of businessmen and politicians. This chapter discusses the impact of these reforms. Focusing on the construction sector in a middle-sized town in Central Java named Pekalongan, it highlights the various ways in which local elites in such towns use their social networks to undermine attempts to make the allotment of construction projects more transparent and impersonal.

Indonesia's economy has since long been characterized by an intense cooperation between politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen, as 'insider' firms were granted privileged access to markets and state contracts in exchange for kickbacks and electoral support. The New Order state was termed patrimonial (Crouch 1979) as political and military elites could reap large benefits by creating business monopolies for their cronies and limiting the competition from 'outsider' firms (Cheung 2005; Beeson 2001). Patron–client relations developed between business entrepreneurs and administrators. Entrepreneurs won business opportunities by performing favours and drumming up electoral support for political leaders. This system not only limited incentives for Indonesian firms to be competitive, but also fuelled social inequalities. The 'Suharto franchise' basically amounted to officials using 'the coercive power of government to impose this "private taxation" on the general public' and to redistribute the revenue to a small elite (McLeod 2011:52).

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Indonesia's monetary crisis and the fall of Suharto provided a strong impetus to end this *kolusi* between business and politics. Using a discourse centred on 'transparency', 'accountability' and 'good governance', international agencies swooped in to propose measures that were intended to strengthen the capacity of state institutions to implement policies and allocate resources in a more impersonal, rule-bound manner. Government institutions were directed to use open tender processes to award governmental contracts, and the system of certifications was beefed up to monitor the quality and trustworthiness of firms applying for these contracts. A few years after these reforms were implemented, it became apparent that 'predatory elites' had been very successful in circumventing such measures to maintain their lucrative access to state resources. Observers began to criticize the technocratic nature of the 'neo-institutionalist' reforms, arguing that adoption of various regulatory measures did little to address the weaknesses of state institutions and might have even played into the hands of elites who possessed the capacity to manipulate the implementation of state regulations (Hadiz and Robison 2005; Hadiz 2010; Beeson 2001).

This chapter offers a local, up-close evaluation of the impact of these economic reforms by highlighting both the resulting changes and some continuities in the way the construction sector operates in one provincial town. Through ethnographic fieldwork on the functioning of local construction companies in Pekalongan, on the north coast of Central Java, it shows that while local construction firms have lost some of their hold over the process of awarding contracts, the practice of developing strong ties between politicians and contractors has not disappeared. On the contrary, as local firms now face stiffer competition from outside contractors, they have tightened their links with politicians to find ways to keep these competitors out. These practices, this chapter argues, can be particularly successful in middle-sized towns. In a place like Pekalongan the interpersonal networks are sufficiently tight-knit to develop effective control over the tendering process.

Procurement Regimes

The construction sector in Indonesia has long been highly politicized. The awarding of governmental contracts for building roads or schools proved also to be an effective way to provide jobs to supporters. Provisions were put in place to prioritize small and local firms, and contractors began to

develop close ties with the ruling Golkar party to maximize their chances of securing new contracts. In line with the corporatist setting of the New Order, the Indonesian builders association Gapensi only had member firms who were willing to prove their loyalty to Golkar (MacIntyre 1991).

As part of the reform agenda adopted after 1998, this interaction between contractors and state officials came under scrutiny. By making the awarding of contracts more transparent and rule-bound, government projects might be made more efficient and less costly – particularly if the common practice of paying a kickback for receiving a contract could be curtailed (World Bank 2001). In 1999 the first bill on procurement activities was adopted, to be followed by several others.[1] These laws tightened rules for classifying and certifying the firms that were permitted to compete in a government tender process. Construction firms were classified on the basis of their turnover, equipment and personnel, thus limiting the number of firms that could compete for the bigger projects. The certification process was not only intended to limit the capacity of politicians and bureaucrats to manipulate the process on behalf of their client-firms, but also aimed to improve the quality of the work. Companies that performed badly could lose their certification. A board for the development of the construction sector was set up to oversee the certification. With a national office and many regional branches, the Institute for the Development of the Construction Industry (Lembaga Pengembangan Jasa Konstruksi, LPJK) was entrusted with the task of accrediting construction firms. However, particularly many smaller firms felt the LPKJ was biased against them. In 2010 they convinced the politicians to curtail LPKJ's responsibilities. After that the association of construction companies was permitted to certify their own member firms.

A second innovation was that the tender process for awarding a government contract became more open. All tenders (apart from those on the smallest budgets) had to be announced publicly and be open for applications from companies based anywhere in Indonesia. Since the presidential instruction of 2007, an electronic system for announcing and applying to tenders has been set up. The e-procurement system is by now widely used and has, according to Indonesia's anti-corruption body KPK, led to a

[1] Apart from the enactments of the bill (Law 18/ 1999), there are at least six implementing regulations, namely Government Regulations 28/2000 on the role of the construction society in the construction sector; 80/2003 on guidelines for the construction sector (amended as 4/2010, and re-amended as 92/2010); and 29/2000 on information required for the procurement activities (amended as 59/2010).

significantly more effective use of state budgets.[2] Nonetheless, the e-procurement system was still on trial during my fieldwork in Pekalongan. To make the tender process even more transparent, some government agencies started to invite citizens to participate in the evaluation of the bids.[3] One result has been, for example, that the central government allocation for education within the Special Funding Allocation (Dana Alokasi Khusus, DAK) is now often disbursed through school committees, as I will discuss in more detail below.

Resisting Reform in Pekalongan

Pekalongan is a medium-sized town of 300,000 inhabitants in Central Java. Most derive their livelihood from trading activities, while many jobs are also related to the public sector. The private sector consists mostly of textile-related industries such as batik, sarong and garments, ranging in scale from home industries to sizeable manufacturing plants. The city used to process fish and produce jasmine tea on a small scale, but both have declined in recent years. After dipping into the red during the Asian crisis of the late 1990s, economic growth in the city of Pekalongan once more reached a healthy 5% p.a. in 2010. There are at present 95 construction enterprises in Pekalongan, up from 42 in 1998. Most are very small, lacking permanent offices or equipment let alone permanent personnel. The assets of most of these companies do not amount to more than a few million rupiah (a few hundred US dollars). Their most prized assets are their political contacts and their experience. When company directors have to report their assets on official tender forms, they regularly mention their private homes as company assets, in order to qualify for bigger projects. Most of the construction activities commissioned by Pekalongan's local government involve relatively small projects such as local roads, bridges, irrigation channels and ditches. For the bigger projects Pekalongan's companies lack the equipment and capacity. A Jakarta firm was hired to build the local hospital.

More than half of the contractors in Pekalongan today used to work for one of the two big construction firms operating here in the 1980s, CV

[2] See 'Mencegah korupsi melalui *e-procurement*', KPK Jakarta 2007, http://www.kpk.go.id/uploads/rnd/mencegah_korupsi_melalui_eprocurement.pdf (last accessed October 2012).

[3] Examples are the water and sanitation procurement programme (PAMSIMAS) and the 'Water Supply and Sanitation for Low Income Communities' projects coordinated by the Ministry of Health. See LP3ES 2007.

Bersatu and Ikamuda Enterprise. The directors of these two firms, respectively Wabi Baisya and Kamaludin Bachir, developed a proximity to Golkar and the military establishment. This enabled them to monopolize the town's construction activities. Having worked together in these two firms, the current leaders of Pekalongan's construction sector form a relatively tight-knit network.

The *reformasi* period shook up the construction sector in Pekalongan. As Golkar lost its grip on power, new construction firms could gain access to projects by cultivating contacts with the political parties who emerged after the fall of Golkar. Pekalongan's construction companies can be divided into two groups. On the one hand there are the 'senior' enterprises set up before the fall of Suharto, who are generally still close to politicians and bureaucrats from Golkar. The second, 'junior', group are those firms set up after the fall of Suharto, who benefited from Golkar's weakened grip on power by aligning themselves with new political parties. As the number of firms increased, competition for contracts became more fierce. The builder's association associated with Golkar lost much of its influence as new associations – mostly associated with new political parties – have come up.

This increased competition has not, however, necessarily made the competition for government contracts more transparent. In the following section I will assess the impact of the reforms on the process of allotting government contracts. I will identify three ways through which bureacrats, politicians and construction firms sometimes succeed in circumventing the new regulations on procurement activities to defend their own interests. Firstly, in the context of increased political competition, politicians can ill afford to award government contracts without demanding financial and electoral support in return. As a result, clientelistic practices have hardly subsided. Secondly, as politicians and bureaucrats are sensitive to arguments that local firms should benefit from local-government budgets, they turn a blind eye to the ongoing intimidation the locals practise against outsider firms to discourage them from participating in tender processes. Thirdly, weaknesses of local civil society defeat policy efforts to increase citizen participation, as a lack of knowledge enables local contractors to manipulate the proceedings. I will discuss these observations in turn.

Clientelistic Practices

Projects are awarded through the involvement of three types of local actors: members of parliament, builders associations and administrators. Once the district government budget has been agreed between the

Pekalongan local parliament and local-government officers (*dinas*), the branch chair persons of the various builders associations are summoned and they are informed about upcoming tenders in Pekalongan in the coming year. However, this meeting is only the official start of an open bidding process for these tenders. Informal agreements have usually already been made long before between administrators and politicians on the one hand, and contractors on the other. These agreements generally involve a clientelistic exchange, as builders promise to contribute to election campaigns in exchange for help to secure a government contract. For example, one of my informants, Syukri (40), is a contractor belonging to the second, 'younger', group. In 2008 he financed the campaign for the 2009 legislative election of a candidate from the Golkar party named Sayid. He expected that once Sayid was elected, he would help get him some government projects. The newer contractors mainly focused on developing such ties with politicians, while the 'senior' builders made use of their connections to administrators. The latter do not necessarily offer administrators electoral support, although some of them do cultivate these contacts for launching a political career. Rather, they offer lucrative kickbacks and, occasionally, support to secure a promotion. In this way, politicians often back a different contractor than the administrators. Project allotments take the form of negotiations between them, with the mayor as the final 'referee'.

These actors do not have unlimited freedom to hand the contract to their preferred contractors. They still need to work within the existing procurement rules, which for example do not allow them to award a contract to a more costly bidder. All tenders are published in the newspapers, and the bids have to be evaluated on the basis of more or less open criteria. Yet it is at this point that administrators and politicians can manipulate proceedings in favour of their preferred company. For each tender process, specifications ('spek' is the commonly used term in Pekalongan) are formulated to detail what the bidding company needs to deliver. By including very particular specifications, the competition can be narrowed considerably. For example, when the local government needed new computers, those involved in the tender process specified that they desired only one particular computer brand – of which 'their man' was the only distributor in Central Java. In this way the inclusion of very specific requirements in the 'spek' enables politicians and administrators to favour 'their' companies. In this way the new procurement rules do curtail the freedom of local elites – as they have to be much more transparent in

awarding contracts – but enough loopholes remain to give them at least some grip over the tendering process.

After the fall of the New Order, both the number of contractors and of political parties have multiplied. Clientelistic networks organized around a few powerful patrons within the Golkar party have atrophied, while multiple smaller cliques have sprung up that now compete to develop access to state resources. Indonesia's democratization process has given politicians more influence in the process of awarding government contracts. Election results have therefore become of vital importance to the construction sector. After the fall of Suharto in 1998, Golkar lost considerable influence and, consequently, its associated builder association Gapensi lost its grip on the process of allotting contracts. New competing associations emerged to profit from this situation. Nevertheless, in 2005 a Golkar candidate managed, with the support of local Gapensi members, to become Pekalongan's mayor. That meant a major membership boost for Gapensi, which was once again the place to be. As they had by far the largest membership (more than 70% of all Pekalongan's contruction firms were Gapensi members) they claimed the right to distribute most projects among their own members.

Such observations suggest that old clientelistic practices die hard in Pekalongan. Despite the implementation of reforms that aimed to make procedures more impersonal and rule-bound, the nurturing of clientelistic ties between builders, politicians and administrators is still common practice. One reason for the persistence of this practice is that they strengthen ties that are essential to protect local firms against increased competition from outside firms. I will discuss this further below.

Pekalongan Money for Pekalongan People

The reforms in the tendering process have in principle opened the bidding process for government contracts to companies from any part of Indonesia. The Pekalongan construction sector was ill-prepared to face this competition. In the first years after 2006, when the open tender system started, more than half the projects were awarded to companies from outside of Pekalongan.[4] This led to protests from the local construction firms, and their arguments were well received by local politicians. As the

[4] Interview with the head of the tender committee, 'Mr A'.

head of Pekalongan's parliament, Salahudin (37), said, '*uang orang Pekalongan harus untuk orang Pekalongan*', or, 'Pekalongan money should be for Pekalongan people'. Local elites became convinced that the strict implementation of an open tendering process would imply a loss of livelihood for those working in construction.

A solution was devised to prevent this. An informal *kesepakatan*, or understanding, developed between bureaucrats, politicians and builders. The tender process would proceed in a normal fashion, but ways would be sought to discourage outsiders from applying. As usual, the tender would be announced in the newspapers, and after submission of the proposals the tender committee would verify the proposals before reaching its final decision. Part of the process was a 'screening' of participating firms on their suitability. It was at this stage that subtle and not-so-subtle techniques were applied to pressure outside firms to withdraw their bid. Local firms would hire local *preman* (strong men) to approach representatives from outside firms and, if needed, intimidate them and so prevent them from submitting or pursuing their bid. As one builder said to me, his 'friends' were ready with a knife if the outside participants were reluctant to withdraw. 'But it hardly ever resulted in real violence', he added, implying that intimidation usually had the desired effect. This practice is so well known that during my fieldwork everyone I met, from the head of Pekalongan parliament, through departmental heads of offices, the tender committee, heads of associations and the contractors themselves, all discussed it openly, sometimes even without my asking about it. Yet my informants were aware that this practice contravened national regulation. An executive of the builders association Gapensi told me he did not want 'Jakarta people' to find out, as 'it would have a serious impact if they did'.

Ironically, in this respect the reforms in the construction sector seem to have had an adverse affect. Measures that were intended to break clientelistic ties and to open the bidding process have drawn local contractors, politicians and administrators together into tighter collusive bonds. They recognized their shared interest in keeping outsiders out and in preventing punitive measures from 'Jakarta'.

The Capture of School Committees

Part of the reform of the procurement process was the involvement of civil society in the awarding of government contracts. However, an

examination of the actual functioning of one of these civil-society organizations reveals how and why such organizations cannot always live up to the expectation of being a watchdog against corruption and nepotism. School committees have been set up all over Indonesia over the last ten years to assist local schools with such activities as devising new curricula and setting up and maintaining facilities. Before the committees, the school principal had been in charge of these activities, but now the principal merely acts as a member of the committee, together with parents and prominent social leaders.[5] There have been school committees before,[6] but the committees proposed in Law 2003 on the education system increased the role and responsibilities of parents. The school committees became particularly important after 2006. In that year the Special Funding Allocation scheme (DAK), a key financing instrument in regional autonomy, began funding construction projects in the education sector. The Ministry of Education decreed that only the school committee could propose construction activities at school. The committees suddenly became very important in the process of acquiring and spending money for school facilities. The World Bank had advised this role for school committees[7] because it believed that if parents as stakeholders are involved in proposing and supervising projects, they will have strong incentives to award contracts to reliable and efficient contractors.

In practice this supervisory role is undermined both by a lack of capacity and by the persistence of clientelistic practices. Neny (38) is principal of one of the 132 private elementary schools in Pekalongen. At first she did not pay much attention to the composition of the school committee. She told me that when the head of the education office in Pekalongan ordered her to submit the names of members of her school committee, she had no idea whom to contact. She randomly asked some people she knew, such as her neighbours, close friends and family members. At first she cared little about the background of the members of the committee and saw it as a mere bureaucratic requirement: 'I was busy taking care of my students and other affairs at my school.' But gradually she realized it was important to have people with political contacts and lobbying skills on

[5] www.mandikdasmen.depdiknas.go.id/docs/dok_14.pdf (accessed 26 June 2010).

[6] Earlier school committees were called POMG (Persatuan Orang Tua Murid dan Guru) or Teachers and Parents Group. Before that, the name was BP3 (Badan Pembantu Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan).

[7] Personal communication on 1 September 2009 with Dr TNE, who was a World Bank consultant involved in drafting the new policies on school committees in Indonesia, and who wishes to remain anonymous.

the committee. In order to acquire state funds for school facilities, the school has to send proposals to the Department of Education within the district government. This department does not have the final say in the evaluation of these proposals, but issues a recommendation to the regional parliament, which takes the final decision. It is at this stage that the school needs to have relations with the constructors and their political contacts to ensure that its proposal is successful.

School committees without strong political connections stand less chance of state funding. When Neny heard that her school could submit proposals to renovate her school, she began to regret that she did not have someone with a construction background on her committee. She asked a friend of her brother, who was a local contractor, to join the committee. 'It was such a good opportunity for my school to renovate the building. As a private school, it is so hard to mobilize funds for these expenses. I could not let this opportunity pass by just because our school committee had no one with a technical background in construction'. She needed someone with contacts in parliament and the Education Department – precisely the contacts that contractors cultivate professionally. At the same time, however, committees that rely on local contractors to secure state budgets lose their capacity to critically supervise the process of awarding a contract. Once the budget is approved, the contract will go to the contractor who helped to secure the budget.

Baiqi is a 40-year-old constructor. He can help us understand how the supervisory role of the school committee is undermined in practice. He has been active since a young age in the youth organization Garda Bangsa, which belongs to the large Islamic association Nadhlatul Ulama (NU). NU has numerous schools. Baiqi's membership of Garda Bangsa has yielded abundant contacts with principals of NU schools. Many have asked him to join their school committees. As ordinary members did not know how to prepare a DAK funding proposal, Baiqi was often asked to use his expertise in dealing with government to do so. Each one of his first four proposals was successful. Other schools began to seek him out as well. At present he sits on the committees of no less than 12 schools, which enables him to secure the construction projects from all these schools. Lack of knowledge among ordinary committee members makes them dependent on those who do know; and the need is not simply for technical knowledge. As proposals are not awarded in a straightforward, rule-bound manner, the committees need someone with good political contacts. These dependencies force school committees to go along with the clientelistic practices that they were supposed to prevent.

Conclusion: The Construction Sector after Reformasi

This chapter has discussed the challenges of making the process of awarding government contracts more transparent and less corruption-prone. After the fall of Suharto, various measures were adopted to end the long-standing collusion between contractors and state officials. Ethnographic fieldwork on the construction sector in one provincial town has revealed that the local impacts of these reforms have at times been contrary to their intention. In some respects the reforms did have the desired effects. The procurement process was wrestled from the control of a few powerful patrons. In the early years of the reforms, the construction sector seemed to have become more open as many contracts were awarded to contractors from outside of Pekalongan, suggesting that local connections were not all-important in the process of awarding government contracts. But this chapter has shown that local clientelistic networks proved to have considerable resilience. They regained their capacity to undermine the reform measures.

The social networks in a medium-sized town such as Pekalongan are relatively tightly knit compared to larger cities. These have enabled local contractors, administrators and politicians to devise ways of regaining control over the procurement process. I discussed three interrelated strategies. Firstly, I highlighted that the reforms failed to curb prevailing clientelistic practices. In their quest for campaign budgets and electoral support, local politicians could ill afford to award government contracts without forcing contractors to return the favour. So, while the appearance of an open bidding process was maintained, contractors made deals with politicians and administrators to increase their chances of winning a contract. These clientelistic deals were facilitated by the fact that all the local actors had a shared interest in preventing state budgets from going to outside actors. The second strategy I discussed was the intimidation of outside contractors to enhance the opportunities for local contractors. With the knowledge of local administrators, local *preman* are hired to discourage outsiders from submitting or pursuing their bid. Thirdly, I discussed why policy provisions to involve civil society could not change these practices. As members of school committees needed people with skills and political contacts to gain access to state budgets, they have become dependent on the very actors – contractors and politicians – whose actions they were supposed to supervise.

Taken together, this chapter underlines earlier critiques (for instance, Hadiz 2010) of the inadequacy of policy measures adopted after the fall of

the New Order due to their technocratic nature. Measures to change the functioning of state bureaucracies had often been adopted at the behest of multilateral organizations like the World Bank. By wishing away or, at least, paying insufficient attention to the broader (clientelistic) political context in which these reforms are carried out, the measures often end up having little effect, and sometimes even make things worse. The livelihoods of the actors involved – local contractors, but also politicians and administrators – depend on finding ways to circumvent or undermine the implementation of reform measures. As a result, the measures end up having the unintended effect of strengthening rather than weakening clientelistic exchanges of favours between provincial town actors who know each other well.

PART THREE

EVERYDAY CULTURE

Fig 7. PONTIANAK: The city is built on top of a swamp, with houses on stilts or piles; sometimes when a big truck passes by, you can almost see the asphalt ripple like a wave under its tires (and you can definitely feel the hollow reverberations). In some neighbourhoods the only dry land is the cemetery, which therefore doubles as a playground.
May 2010: photo by S. Chris Brown

GROWING UP IN KUPANG

Cornelis Lay (edited, translated and with an introduction by Gerry van Klinken)[1]

Yogya

On 15 May 1979 I left Kupang for the famous student town of Yogyakarta, in the heart of Java. Flying on a Merpati Airlines Fokker 27, my friend George Eman and I – he was of Dutch descent and we always called him Ge or just Whitey (*Bule*) – transited in Denpasar and reached Surabaya in the afternoon. It was my first time in an aeroplane. All my childhood

[1] Editorial introduction

Connie Lay's memories of this quiet provincial town in the late 1960s and the 1970s are bathed in the radiant light of adolescence. As he and his mates roamed the deserted shopping street in the dark, he recalled, 'there was no other sound besides our chatter: Kupang at night was a peaceful village, our village.' Happiness was belonging; it was knowing what everyone was eating and even knowing their underwear. Given a chance to choose again, he would have it no different, he tells us at the end. The question for the reader is how reliable these memories are. Do they tell us something about Kupang in the 1970s, or do they merely reveal the mid-life nostalgia of a successful academic, who left this city behind almost 35 years ago, and, with it, his kampung origins? These memories are, after all, just that – there is no box with letters, diaries, photos, favourite books, clippings or homework assignments. The answer is probably a bit of both. The technique of 'interviewing the self' brought back a flood of detailed memories that had for decades lain dormant. Stories of freedom any well-adjusted boy retains – of racing after kites, of watching big boys fight, sneaking into the movies, and teasing the town idiot. But also stories that grow out of middle-age nostalgia, wishing to honour parents and friends, polite memories from which, for example, adolescent voluptuous fantasies have been purged. Kupang has been good to Connie Lay. We cannot help wondering whether the mates who were left behind in the market, functionally illiterate, shut out from the easy life of the 'boss boss' civil servants, and by now with numerous children to support, have memories as suffused with warmth as this.

Nevertheless, like Carolyn Steedman's (1987) autobiograpy of life in the British lower class, in which critics also saw middle class romanticization of an

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dreams of flying came rushing back during the long flight. An extraordinary sensation. We were met by a business partner of Ge's dad – after he retired from the police, Uncle Eman had become an agent for Comfeed chicked feed – and were put up in a small hotel in a part of Surabaya that

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impoverished past, this one depicts something beyond an unusual personal success story. Lay's recollection of an urgent desire for upward mobility was not unique to him. His mother felt the same urge and worked hard to satisfy it through her son. Many lower-class kampung dwellers in provincial towns today continue to share the dream, as we can read in Wenty Marina Minza's and Jan Newberry's contributions to this volume. In that respect Kupang of the 1970s differed from Clifford Geertz's stagnating Mojokuto of the 1950s, which was 'stranded, at least for the moment, between the heritage of yesterday and the possibilities of tomorrow' (1963b:17). The poor in Kupang had no cultural reservations about tomorrow. They just had the devil of a job to get there.

Lay is as fascinated with class difference as with the possibilities of bridging it. In this respect, too, his account confirms those of Minza and Newberry. Yes, he denies the class differences were sharp. In his memory the town was as united, peaceful, plural and accepting as any town could be. The boys' games seemed to be a cross-class celebration of solidarity among kids against adults, reinforced by an esoteric youth language. Yet the differences remained real, and I would not be surprised if they were sharper than Lay's warm feelings towards his home town now allow him to admit. The poor deployed a clear terminology for the rich. They called them 'big people', 'big boss', 'boss boss', or, as the ultimate condemnation for exclusive behaviour, 'rich people'. Granted, the lack of neighbourly solidarity the well-off showed towards others might, at least on the surface, also be seen as their own form of poverty. And not everything about the peculiar obsessions the 'big people' seemed to hold dear was necessarily attractive. Their concern for hygiene seemed excessive, as did their fixation with the orderly practices of prayer and church attendance. Yet, a lower-class boy who sat at school with them still felt inferior in their presence. Their parents had an ease of access to the state and the church that his own parents did not, much as they tried to contort their speech into formal Indonesian. Other contributions in this volume (notably by Nico Warouw and Sylvia Tidey) confirm that this access defined the boundary between the indigenous middle and lower classes.

Kupang at this time had around 50,000 inhabitants and was growing rapidly. It had been the capital of the large province of East Nusa Tenggara since 1959. The oil-fueled New Order regime began transforming provincial townscapes all over the archipelago in the 1970s. Leirissa, Kuntowidjojo and Soenjata Kartadarmadja's (1984) post-war social history of Kupang, and I.H. Doko's (1982) description of a drive around the town in the same period makes delightful reading, but neither so convincingly portrays life 'from below' as Cornelis Lay does here. Connie's father

happened to be called Kupang also. The next evening we took the night bus to Yogya and arrived before dawn. Using a cycle rickshaw (*becak*) – another first, since the only one I knew in Kupang was used by a Sabu man to carry foodstuffs at the Pelita market – we headed for the home of a relative who taught at Gadjah Mada University. I called him Uncle Josef.

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was a *papalele*, an itinerant trader. The draft book from which this chapter was extracted relates the constant moving that this life involved. Arriving from Sabu in the late 1940s, he first laboured in the harbour, then rode trucks into the interior to buy cattle skins, tamarind and candlenut, and finally ran a succession of stalls with the whole family in the heart of Kupang. As a local government full of development plans repeatedly evicted them, the stall crept gradually down the street and from one marketplace to another. Now father was selling rice, now meat off-cuts (*jeroan*). Young Connie, meanwhile, roved the town selling cakes and packets of cooked rice, finding pretty stones to sell, gambling with his friends at a funeral, or looking for scrap timber to repair the house. Or else he spent boring afternoons looking after mum and dad's stall.

Bonds of patronage sometimes reached across the class divide. Connie Lay's own story starts when his mother engages in a spectacularly brave claim on such patronage on behalf of her son. She confronts both the local head of education and the provincial deputy governor and announces she is their 'sister', though she hasn't seen either of them more than once in two decades. It works like a charm. They embrace her and write the necessary letters. And of course Connie Lay has the native talent to repay their faith. But there is a less tractable side to the class difference as well. During the anti-communist purges beginning in late 1965 soldiers carried off several inhabitants of the poor Dendeng neighbourhood where they lived; they were never seen again. We do not learn here how many people in the kampung had been interested in politics, but these events put an end to all that. Violence was said to be rare, yet when it did erupt, it was often related to the military. Kupang was the mobilizational base for the invasion of East Timor in late 1975. Once back in town, East Timor veterans acted out their violent feuds with the police on the streets. Young military men who lost their 'duels' would call on their mates to trash the house of a non-military winner.

Put together, we have a tantalizing glimpse from below of provincial-town life in a developing country at a moment of rapid change. The sense of being connected to 'events and places in various ways' touched every corner of this apparently quiet town. The subtle tension in the story arises when one of the 'people with woes' (*orang susah*) sets out on a quest to get even closer to the action, and discovers that small-town intimacy by no means implies equality.

Gerry van Klinken

Our thanks to Amalinda Savirani for suggesting the outline of this chapter, and to Chris Brown for suggesting the Steedman reference.

His full name was Josef Riwu Kaho, he was related to my mother. The family came from Sabu, a little island between Timor and Sumba, but he had been born and raised in Atambua, a small town that I only visited once, before the 1977 election, 240 km from Kupang. Uncle Josef's nuclear family probably had ten members, but there were about 60 others sleeping in a long barracks there, too. As was the custom, migrants from the kampung were put up with family already there. He had come to Yogya in 1959, finished his studies and stayed on as a lecturer. Thousands of his students remember him, mainly for his tough discipline. We called him a 'killer', with 'Dutch discipline'. When Uncle Josef was in junior high, in the early 1950s, he lived right next door to us, in a house owned by the labour boss Simon Boeboe, who was affiliated with the communist party. It is said that Uncle Simon was killed in the big purge of 'communists'.[2] The land we lived on was a gift from him.

When we got to his house it was still very early, about 6 a.m., but he was up. The house, which he still occupies, lay in the Baciro area and was a Home Affairs Department residence for lecturers at Gadjah Mada University (UGM) training mid-level bureaucrats for all of Indonesia. The house looked friendly and there was the sound of birds. We both spontaneously greeted him by kissing noses – a Sabunese custom for use whenever and wherever. He knew we were coming and told us to sit down. Uncle Robert had sent a telegram. Once inside I gave him a letter from Uncle Robert. I suspected it told him who I was and entrusted me to his care, as was the custom.

After chatting a while and listening to his advice, we were invited to breakfast. Never in my life had I had breakfast. Not because it was not common in Kupang, but because we didn't have enough food. I remember several times nearly passing out from hunger – once actually passing out – on the way home from primary school. But I tried the breakfast and got it down. It was the first time I ate *tempe* (fried soybean cakes).

Uncle Robert's letter had a history. The day after I told my mother that I wanted to go to Yogya, she went to visit two important officials. One was Uncle Robert, provincial head of the Education Department, the other Uncle Adi Boeky, East Nusa Tenggara deputy governor. I was astonished, because as far as I knew she had in all my 20 years only once before visited them, when I was still small. She told me they were relatives, but didn't communicate much. To me and to everyone in Kupang, they were 'big

[2] He actually died in 1962, some say of poisoning, but in any case just before the purges started late in 1965 (ed.).

people'. Even more amazing was their reaction when they saw my mother; they greeted her warmly, called her 'susi Edo' and kissed her lightly nose to nose. This to Sabunese is the equivalent of shaking hands in Java, and at the same time a way of 'forgiving' each other. We children always did it on those rare occasions when Babu and Nene – our names for mum and dad – were angry. I don't know why, but once nose touched nose, the anger evaporated just like that.

As we sat in the guest room – in Uncle Adi Boeky as well as Uncle Robert's houses – mother introduced me in the Sabu language – or what Sabunese call Hawu, since they can't produce the letter 's'. She said: 'This is your child Ney' – this was my name in Kupang – 'Mone Miha', the eldest child. She confidently explained that I was 'going to school in Java' and asked for their advice. Uncle Adi immediately said, 'Yes, go to Yogya'. At first I was sure he would forget, but he didn't. When he came to Yogya two years later he asked me, via someone else, to meet him in the Garuda Hotel. Uncle Adi said lots of things, in the vein that I had to study hard, avoid bad friends and 'don't go with other people's kids'. Exactly what all old people tell their own kids. The conversation with Uncle Robert was even stricter. He didn't just support the Yogya plan, but he touched the small gold brooch my mother wore and said: 'If necessary Susi (the word for older sister that apparently comes from the Dutch), you have to sell this brooch.' He said lots more, then wrote a letter to Uncle Josef, whom he called Usu, even though in Yogya Uncle Josef was always known as Comrade (*Bung*) Jossie or Uncle Jossie, just as I am always known there as Connie.

To cut a long story short, I passed the test at last, and started my political science studies at UGM in 1980. Seven years later I graduated and became a lecturer, until today.

Dendeng

I was born on 6 September 1959 in Dendeng, along a dead-end road south of the old town. My family still live there. I don't know when they came here, but dad once hinted it might have been 1948. Dendeng is actually the name of a small river, the only one in Kupang, which flows from the western side of town and has water even in the dry season. The Mapoli and Air Nona rivers flow into it from further south. But the name also refers to its small, sloping eastern bank, where our family lives along with a few others. People say the Dutch used to come to this cool place to swim. A lot of large *banyan* and *cananga* trees grow here, also right next to our

house. There are fruit trees such as the tamarind, mangoes, lots of coconut and banana trees, breadfruit, guava and a few soursops.

Dendeng also supplies clean water. Right below our house the small tank the Dutch built still holds water. From here it flows through a pipe to the *benteng*, the Dutch fort at the river mouth that still serves as army barracks today. We thought of it as a military reservoir. Every year a group of soldiers came from the *benteng* to clean the inside of the tank, which was always covered. We never played on the tank when they were there. Sometimes they would come for an unannounced inspection, move off anybody illegally tapping water through a hole in the pipe they had made, and fix the holes.

The dam the Dutch also built here survived until the flood of early 1973. It had a little 'waterfall' in the middle, with a natural swimming pool below. This is where people swam, or learned to swim, and even held swimming races. They played 'water ball' with a plastic ball, or two people just splashed each other as hard as they could in the face using their hands in turn. In the end one would give up with stinging eyes. In the right corner of the pool there was a place with coloured clay – brown, red, white, yellow, blue and green – which we used to make dolls. A lot of fun. The clay also served as 'shampoo' and 'toothpaste' – we put some in our mouth and rubbed with the index finger. Crushed charcoal also made good toothpaste.

Electricity only reached Dendeng in 1982. In very small quantities, because it would go off every time someone used the electric iron. I never saw a telephone. Almost no one had electric lighting. Just the houses of the 'big people', the shops that were almost all owned by ethnic Chinese, and a few houses next to the power line, if they could afford it. By the way, having a house on the main road was not a question of socio-economic status. Lots of poor families lived along the main road, although some roads had mainly 'big people'.

My birthplace Dendeng lay only two or two and a half kilometres from the centre of town. It was a dark place, but not isolated. Two cars could pass on the road in. But not many people wished to live there. Only a few families were there until the 1960s. There was Markus and his family, he was a communist who was condemned to death after Gestok.[3] Their house had a stone wall, a zinc roof and a cement floor. It lay next to ours and until today his eldest daughter, Tante Net, still lives there with her

[3] Gestok = Gerakan Satu Oktober, the 1 October Movement, i.e. the failed communist-military putsch in Jakarta of 1 October 1965 that triggered bloody anti-communist purges in the months to follow.

children and grandchildren. Her twin children, Adi and Kaka, were my playmates. Below that, near the river, was the Malada family home, the independence hero who gave his name to the road into Dendeng, Cak Malada Road. 'Cak' is a popular term of address equivalent to the 'bung' used by the Surabaya revolutionaries. In all of Kupang only two people were called Cak: Cak Malada and Cak Doko, the pioneer in education who was once education minister in the federal period of the late 1940s. The Malada family are highly educated. Their house is made of stone, with a zinc roof and a cement floor and surrounded by a large garden on the edge of the river. We called his daughter Tanta Malada. She once had a position in the Social Welfare Department, and died a spinster at the age of more than 80. We had many other neighbours less famous than these.

With money my dad gave me I sometimes bought iced drinks from a middle-aged woman called Tante Kudji. She got the ice from the big factory called Minerva, owned by Koen Seong, a Chinese trader who was said to be the richest person in town. There were only two factories in town: the Minerva ice factory and a meat-processing factory called ICAFF, not far from the home of the *raja* of Kupang in the Mapoli area. I don't know who owned it, but it was said that Raja Nisnoni was one of them and that the others were foreign. It closed in the mid-1970s. Koen Seong's business went down because his children chose other professions and moved out of Kupang. His place as the town's richest was taken by the owner of Toko Piet, who built a five-storey shop, the biggest building in the heart of town. Toko Piet had the monopoly on the distribution of kerosene and petrol, perhaps until the present day.

Koen Seong's house stood on a sharp bend in the road just in front of the police station, close to the '40 Steps' and to the mouth of Cak Malada road, which led to Dendeng. It was a large house with a big garden, surrounded by a high fence topped with barbed wire. It was probably the only house in Kupang with such a high fence. Right behind it stood a huge mango tree. We often threw stones at it from Cak Malada road, trying to bring down the fruit. If any fell down, we climbed in through a gap between the wires on top of the wall. This was risky because, as the sign 'Beware of the Dog' said at the entrance, we often had to bolt to get away from the dog.

The '40 Steps' at the upper corner of Koen Seong's house was a stairway with that many steps. I always took a break there after selling my cakes and packets of rice. A number of shady tamarind trees stood there, a place for people to rest. We often went up and down these stairs counting the steps, but we could never agree on how many there were. Some counted

40, others 41. The steps were a shortcut to the main road between Oeba and Kuanino, coming out just below the governor's residence – now the deputy governor's house. Next to the governor's house, and a little below it, stood Kupang's finest building, the Bank of Indonesia. It was built early in the 1970s on the old Chinese cemetery, which had been moved to who knows where. The opening ceremony was most impressive, as there were singers from Java. The '40 Steps' were one of many stairways in Kupang. I remember Kupang as a 'city of stairways'. All of them were shortcuts.

Neighbours

Life among the neighbours in Dendeng – as, I think, in Kupang generally – was very happy. Of course there were enormous social differences. Sometimes this became a matter for gossip, particularly if someone from a wealthy family 'did not want to mix'. Other than that, interaction was intensive, familiar and egalitarian. When we went into the neighbour's house, we discovered that their rooms and kitchen were just normal. Women sitting down gossiping together while 'looking for lice' was a common sight. Of course, some people liked it more than others. Certain homes became 'gathering places'. In Dendeng that was Uncle Wielawa's house, followed by our own.

The most extraordinary economic difficulties never made people selfish. On the contrary, it merely increased the 'resource exchange' taking place among neighbours. My mother often sent me to the neighbours for salt, cooking oil, little chiles or some spices, because we had run out. And the neighbours gladly gave it. The reverse also happened. Sometimes they would just shout from the house or from the road, and we kids would take it over at a trot. That way everyone knew that family A was short of something and had asked the neighbours. But quite often any random kid that happened to be passing by would be asked to fetch it from the neighbour. Bringing food over was just as normal. It could be a piece of meat, fish, some vegetables or fruit, but also a slice of cake, some boiled maize or cassava, or anything else.

In Dendeng, in fact in any kampung, except where the government officials lived, it wasn't simply a matter of 'taking over some food'. Every family knew what their neighbours were eating every day. Asking what people were eating was normal. And everyone answered honestly, without hiding anything. If there was nothing besides rice they would say, 'we're out of food'. This answer would only stimulate the neighbour to offer their

own vegetables (*lauk*) or immediately take some over to the neighbours. The question 'what are you cooking?' or 'have you cooked yet?' was heard every day in neighbours' chat.[4] Whenever we children played at the neighbour's house – which was every day – their first question would be 'what are you eating at home?'[5] We would answer without hesitation. Often the neighbour would get us to take some food back before returning to play.

We all knew each other's clothes. If anyone left clothing behind at the river – after the wash, or drying on the rocks by the creek – we knew exactly whose it was, even underclothing. This was easy for us because everyone had few clothes. We even knew whose soap was left behind, or a bucket, or anything. Life in Dendeng, and probably in any Kupang kampung at that time, had no secrets, no privacy. But of course it was like the 'resource exchange', people had their own preferences: some kitchens we visited rarely, in some houses the neighbours rarely ate. Some neighbours' clothing everyone knew, others we had to ask first.

These relationships took no account of ethnicity or religion. The Chinese family just up the hill from our house – we called them 'Ence', a word like 'Baba' for Chinese generally – often exchanged resources with us and other neighbours. We kids spent a lot of time eating and playing at their house. The father was a Chinese migrant who we all believed was a Kuntao (Chinese martial arts) expert. He married a Sabu woman. He had a difficult life. His house was the same as ours and like most in the kampung – a grass roof and earthen floor. Their children –Johny, Big Mea and Dickson (who died in a motorcycle accident in year 2 of junior high) – were my close mates. They sold food as I did. Likewise, my dad often received little gifts from 'Aci Kanaan', the owner of the Kanaan shop built in 1970 on the main road heading up to Kuanino, in front of the Sudimampir shop that had been there a long time. The Kanaan-Sudimampir area was a hangout for the (mainly Sabunese) kids from the Fontein neighbourhood, of which Dendeng was a part. Other families got such gifts, too. These intimate neighbourly relations were common in every kampung, except perhaps the elite neighbourhoods of government officials. When I first began regularly visiting an elite area like Tingkat I in the late 1970s, I didn't immediately notice the kind of intimacy we had in Dendeng. They had neighbourly relations involving various kinds of exchange, but it wasn't obvious on the surface.

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[4] 'Masak apa? Su masak ko?'

[5] 'We bosong makan apa di rumah?'

Until the 1970s, when Kupang people said they were relatives or family, they didn't mean something genealogical, but something social. Blood relations were of course an important foundation, but not the most important. Social relations were more decisive. Marriage relations, neighbours, mixing around and work were the points of reference for turning 'relative' into a social concept. The denser the relationship formed, the more strongly we would say they were relatives (*saudara*). All the neighbourly social relations in Dendeng – and in other kampungs, including the market (*pasar*) – were indicated by family terms: aunty, uncle, little sister, big sister, little brother, big brother (*tanta, om, usi, kakak, a'a, bu*). As far as I know, we only ever used the terms mister or sir, mistress or missus (*bapak* or *pak, ibu* or *bu*) for teachers and officials in the office.[6] That wasn't even completely true for the latter, because unwittingly the more intimate expressions of uncle, aunty, brother or sister would bubble up in conversation in government offices, too. Occasionally we would use the word *pak* or *ibu* to a neighbour, but only to tease them if they had just become an official. We would jokingly greet a big brother who had just become a civil servant by saying 'good afternoon, ooh mister civil servant'.

Being our elder or big brother or sister gave these social relations rights as well as obligations. They had the right to shout at us and often handed out punishment – a twist around the ears (*kuti telinga*), a slap (*tempeleng*) or tap (*toki*) and, most often, a tap or a whack with a twig (*dipukul dengan ranting kecil*) – and to boss us around, forbid things, et cetera. Not one of us minded, nor did any of our parents. Generally, after getting annoyed at us, they would tell another elder or older sibling, including our biological elders, and say, 'I just gave a tap to…', and the answer would always be the same: 'Ho.. that's OK…that'll teach him' – an expression of agreement and at the same time of thanks for doing the right thing and fulfilling social obligations to the young one.[7] Sometimes we children would fall asleep at the neighbour's house. If that happened they would surely let us sleep, even till the next day. They would shout or send a message to our parents that we 'were sleeping next door', something that truly reflected the intimacy between neighbours. The neighbours' houses in Dendeng were my own house, and my house belonged to all the neighbours.

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[6] Although these terms also mean 'father' and 'mother', they are more formal and 'Indonesian' and so best translated as 'mister' and 'missus' (ed.).

[7] 'Beta baru toki si ……; Ho …betul su… biar dia kapok.'

Things to Do

That Dendeng was a quiet neighbourhood, even if that was not the whole picture, was true of Kupang in general. Of course there were exceptions, such as the shoot-out between military units around the time of Gestok. Shoot-outs between the police and the army were quite common in the mid-1970s. A really tense moment occurred just before dawn one morning in 1976. An armed unit of soldiers led by Jopy Makaraung – son of the Kupang Raya movie theatre guard – that had just come back from East Timor[8] deliberately waited underneath Merdeka Bridge for a police unit that usually passed by there. Just as in war, they were lying on their bellies near the bridge that carried the main road, about 150 metres from Merdeka Field, the town's only football field and sports complex, and even closer to two technical high schools and the Catholic schooling complex. When a truck passed over the bridge the order to fire rang out. After several bursts they realized it was an air force truck carrying other soldiers. I never heard the end of it, but the whole city was tense and full of gossip. I have no idea why the enmity between police and army had run to weapons.

Dendeng itself also once nearly had a fatal incident. In the early 1970s a Buginese man ran around swinging a *badik,* a traditional Buginese sword, at people along the way. Several were wounded and, if I'm not mistaken, one person died. This almost led to an ethnic brawl. But once everyone understood the guy was crazy, the problem ended without revenge. The same thing happened with a Madurese saté seller in Kampung Baru in the late 1970s. And in the mid-1970s there was a rumour that a group from Alor armed with arrows – the traditional weapon in the island of Alor – were going to 'attack' or 'be attacked by' a group of Rotinese from a small neighbourhood called RRD (Republik Rakyat Dengka, the Dengka People's Republic) in the suburb of Kuanino. I'm not sure what the reason was. But as I heard it from Big Brother Kias Mauguru, an Alorese man who married my school friend Ande Leo's oldest sister Merie, it was triggered by a previous brawl in which one Alorese guy was seriously injured. I saw Alorese come and go across the Dendeng creek two or three nights in a row, because most Alorese live in Mantasi, the kampung across the creek from ours. But it all ended just with a rumour, without open conflict.

Massive brawls were rare in Kupang. Before the Alorese story I had never heard of anyone being mobbed like that. One-on-one fights happened

[8] The Indonesian invasion of the Portuguese colony of East Timor in October 1975 led to years of warfare. Kupang was an important staging post for the war.

more often, though even these could be counted on the fingers of one hand. It seemed to be a rule that the two sides wanting to duel would agree the location and time. Once it was over, regardless of who won, they would agree on the next time and place. Consequently these fights had lots of spectators, and no one intervened except to watch either passively or while actively encouraging one side. I remember clearly the 'serial duel' between two pairs of brothers, Brother Aba and Brother Dato (husband of my eldest sister) versus Brother Yunus Radja and Brother Minggus Radja. This duel took place repeatedly in the late 1960s on the Dendeng creek dam. Each time it went on for a long time. Lots of people watched, many came specially to see it. The end of the story is that Brother Yunus Radja decided to leave for Surabaya to 'sign up for the army' (*teken tentara*) as a marine (KKO), while Brother Minggus Radja took off for Jakarta.

There were a few others like that, but the pattern was nearly always the same all over Kupang. Each one would be widely discussed. One that deviated from the pattern was a 'duel' between Ony Keang and 'Mister Moustache', a navy man. Ony Keang was a rascal, the mixed Chinese-Rote son of a tailor whose little brothers Elvis and Rickhy were my school mates. In this case a whole group of navy soldiers came looking for him afterwards and smashed up his house in Kampung Merdeka. He had to run away for a while. We heard from his little brothers that his father had been terrified.

At the market I had lots and lots of time. Dad was nearly always waiting for stuff, except when he was travelling into the interior. For me, after years of walking all over town from one end to the other with a clear purpose, selling things, this new atmosphere was extremely boring. That's when my friends and I tried to think of an alternative. At first we were happy just to stroll the lanes between the shops, looking for boards we might be able to use at home or to make games. But that got boring, too, after a while. At night we were busy around the Kupang Raya movie theatre. We 'sold stones' – a kind of white stone we found on the beach – although with declining profits as the stones began to run out.

Gambling was another form of entertainment. I am not sure exactly when and who started to transform *mete* into a gambling affair. A few years earlier, in the late 1960s, we children had often watched the adults play cards at the home of the deceased until dawn. This was called *mete*. At first it didn't involve money. People just played 'hang the ear' (*gantong telinga*), the same as we did in the market. But gradually games for money like '41' grew into the main reason to go and express one's condolences. I was clever at it, had a good instinct and some luck. My friend and

neighbour, Ande Leo, financed my play, and joined in as well. We sometimes won big time, and bought lots of textile that Johny Hede sewed into clothes.

This doesn't mean, though, that there was no history of gambling. People say gambling had been part of market life practically for ever, even though I never saw or did it in the Pelita and the Oeba markets. According to mother, Sister Yaty and also people who had known father in the Kupang city market, gambling had been widespread. Father had been very much part of it. But in the 1950s and 1960s the players were restricted to a number of big *papalele* and Chinese entrepreneurs. They used to play more or less clandestinely at the market. The owner of Toko Timor, where we changed mother's large number of coins to help me on my way to Yogya, was one of my father's gambling mates from the past. Other social worlds had their forms of gambling: cock fighting and horse racing. I was involved in *mete* gambling for about a year. After that, I just returned to market life in 1976. I heard that the *mete* became more and more extreme, until they were doing roulette. Up until the time I left Kupang, at any house of mourning you would definitely see the gambling boss (*bandar judi*) setting up a game of roulette. Eventually the card games were abandoned and more and more people came to the *mete* places to play roulette.

The market where my parents had their stall for a time was right next to the navy headquarters, which occupied both sides of the road for hundreds of metres. On the seaside of the headquarters was a cemetery used by muslims from Kampung Solor. This cemetery was important to us, street kids from the market, especially after the late 1960s, because at low tide it offered a shortcut into the navy complex via the reef. We could sneak in without being detected by the guard, notably by Mister Moustache, the navy man with a thick moustache and an athletic body whom we called *go'eng*. Every night films were projected on an outdoor screen. People had to buy a ticket, but here's the problem – we had no money. For those times when the tide was up and we couldn't get in via the sea, we had made a hole in the corrugated iron fence by bending the zinc sheet up in one corner. We always covered the hole with branches so they wouldn't see it. But it was a risky entrance, because the electric lights were bright and it was close to the main gate. We were often caught and then the punishment was – other than being shouted at; we were never beaten – to be locked in the toilets until the film was over. Sometimes those in charge forgot we were in the toilets and we would have to stay there all night. All the street and market kids had experienced it, at least once.

The films varied a lot, and each one would be on for two or three weeks. Mandarin films were mainly martial arts. That's how we knew about David Chiang, Wang Yu, Ti Lung, and so on. One film we talked about for months was *The magnificent seven*.[9] Afterwards we would act out the film in fights among ourselves. Most enjoyable. Then there were the cowboy films, with names like Charles Bronson, Telly Savalas and Clint Eastwood, that we memorized. The most impressive was Clint Eastwood's *For a few dollars more*. We made pistols from *kapok* branches and imitated his way of shooting. Then there were the tear-jerker musical dramas, especially touching for us kids, such as the Dutch film – maybe it was *Heintje* – about a little singer with an extraordinary voice.[10] Indonesian films came in two categories. Martial arts (*silat*) films like *The blind man from Ghost Cave*, *Yellow bamboo* and, especially, *The skull poem*[11] familiarized us with stars like Ratno Timur and Dedy Sutomo. And love dramas in various settings, such as *The Kedawung landlord*, with its lovely star Suzanna, and a film like *Tears of a stepchild,* which made us cry with sadness.[12] Quite often we would watch adult films like *Breathing in the mud* or *Early marriage*.[13] It said 'For ages 17 and up', but no one ever cared if children were watching.

Bioskop Raya was a real movie theatre, a long and very old building next to the ice factory. The films here were newer than those in the navy complex. This was the only one in town, but it went broke after Bachtir built a luxurious new one in 1976. Bachtir was an ethnic Arab businessman, who owned a sawmill and a welding shop in Kampung Bonipoi next to the old mosque. He was the richest Arab in town. This one, too, went bankrupt after the first television came to town in 1977. TV radically changed the way we spent our evenings. Also, his tickets were too pricey for everyone except the few. Apparently the bankruptcy hit the whole Bachtir enterprise. A hotel he was building in Surabaya was abandoned and eventually sold to pay back the debts he had made to build his Kupang Theatre.

Mister Makaraung – I have no idea where he came from – we knew as the guard at the Bioskop Raya. He was already quite old, but still firm. In the front part of the theatre it narrowed a bit and there in a corner lived a crazy fellow we called Uncle Ako. He came from Rote and always wore the

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9 A Mexican cowboy adventure (1960).
10 The German two-part series *Heintje* (1969 and 1970).
11 *Si Buta dari Gua Hantu, Bambu kuning, Panji tengkorak*.
12 *Tuan tanah Kedawung, Ratapan anak tiri.*
13 *Bernafas dalam lumpur, Perkawinan dini*.

same full military uniform, military boots and red beret. Some people said he had not always been crazy, but because he had killed his Dutch superior officer, named Jongker,[14] he pretended to be crazy to avoid justice. There were not many crazy people in Kupang. Besides Uncle Ako there was Crazy Wadu (*Wadu Gila*) from Sabu, who always walked around town naked and did 'yoga' every day. He always slept with his head down and his legs straight up in the air next to the bridge and the Pancasila monument near the mouth of the Dendeng creek, less than a hundred metres from the *benteng*. He could do this for hours, and would fall fast asleep in this position. Wadu Gila lived in the wreck of a wooden boat on the beach next to the pier.

Between 1969 and 1973, our market stall moved four times along the town's main road named Lahi Lahi Bisi Kopan. At first we stood at the threeways, on the corner of Ho Khian Hwat's shop, in the heart of town. After being evicted from there we moved a few dozen metres to the mouth of an alley leading to the home science junior high school where my sister Tina went, just next to Toko Baru. We stayed there a few months until we found a more strategic spot which, moreover, was more or less under cover and, even more important, had electric lighting. This was on the streetside corner of the old Toko Timor, which no longer functioned as a shop. It was about 30 metres from the previous place.

The front of Toko Timor was my favourite place. I often spent the night there. Actually, not many people slept on the street, except a few traders from the interior who had no house to go to. Most of my friends who played on the street and in the market went home at night. But I, Ony Sinlaeloe, Semi and, sometimes, one or two of my friends often slept on the ground in front of the shop. For me the reason was simple. When I returned from play I would sometimes find that father and the rest of the family had already gone home by themselves because the road home was unlit. Like most kids in Kupang, I was afraid of ghosts. Since we were little we were told stories of ghosts and along the road to my house there were many spots which they said 'had a ghost'. But this was just one third of the reason. Another third was that sleeping in front of the shop was closer to the beach where I could catch fish. Another reason was that I had to help my dad every morning to carry his gear from home to the market. Dad would almost without fail be off to the market at about 04:30 in order to beat other buyers to the best meat off-cuts (*jeroan*) that he resold.

[14] Probably this is the honorific 'jongheer'.

By sleeping here I didn't have to get up so early. At about 05:00 dad came by my place, which was only 200 metres from the Kampung Solor market. If I was still asleep, he would wake me up. But if my friends and I were at the beach, he would approach me only after he had completed his purchases. At night, it seemed as if the whole city was our own space, except for one or two corners among the shops where Timorese traders were snoring. There was no other sound besides our chatter: Kupang at night was a peaceful village, our village.

Kites

In July and August everyone flew kites. This is when the wind blew strong. Unlike in many other places, in Kupang flying a kite was not a matter of showing off its beauty, but to compete – we called it *bahoro.* The idea was to manoeuvre the line so it touched the rival's line. After that, we would let out the line in a certain way (we called it *aria*). The friction between the lines would – sometimes only after hours of this – eventually break one or the other's line, or sometimes both. We called it *nao* or *anyo.* It was very tense and many people came to watch from all over town. *Bahoro* required a special space, preferably rather high with few obstacles and a good strong constant wind. A cemetery on the top of a hill was among the favourite sites. In the kite season these places were full of young people. The most exciting part was to chase the kite that had been *nao*. We could race after it for 4 or 5 km and even – this was the nicest and happened the most often – we would swim way out to sea to fetch one, or climb a tree to get it down. Most of us carried a stick with a thorn on the end – called a *ganco* – to catch a kite before it hit the ground. In every season there were always one or two kites that never got *nao.* This was due to a good technique of letting out the line, and to a good quality of 'sharpening the line', which we called *lolo galasan.* Its owner was praised by the public.

There were many other games, also for the girls, and in all these variations my friends and I from the street and the market, like everyone else in Kupang, actively took part without caring about social class, ethnic background or religion. No game was closed to us. Not one part of the annual cycle left us behind, nor the kids from wealthy families. Even kids from the poorest families took part. Conversely, the wealth of children of 'big people' could never dictate a liking for different games to ours, nor did they create games exclusive to themselves. Class, ethnicity, religion and all that became irrelevant. Nor were the games just for kids – practically the whole

town was involved. I could even say the whole city became one giant playground, with everyone participating. These meetings between different social circles created bonds of friendship and strengthened a collective identity. I feel that our identity and solidarity as Kupang people was to a great extent shaped here. Kupang in this period was nothing less than a *gemeinschaft* with a strong face, intensively interconnected through games and the language they created.

Most of the language we created during play, and which we later transferred to our daily conversation, was practically incomprehensible to our families. Father and mother didn't understand most of what we talked about. At home mother always spoke Sabunese. Father combined Indonesian, Kupang Malay and Sabunese. He was most exposed to Kupang Malay, because at the market that was the standard language, yet even he could only understand a bit of what we said. It took him a long time to understand and then begin to use some of it. This was the case in most families.

We didn't just produce words, we also disseminated them intensely through our cycles of play, even in quite dictatorial ways, to ensure they were widely used. It was always the same: we would insist on a word, regardless of whether other people understood it or not. Any kid who could not follow our pronunciation, or used one of our words at the wrong time, would be quickly expelled from our circle of play. We had several ways of doing this: laughing uproariously when anyone mispronounced a word was the most common. A more instinctive way was not inviting that person any more, or breaking up when the person concerned tried to become part of the game. In order to enter the circle of play everyone had to know the 'passwords'; this meant pronouncing words correctly and using them at the right moment. For older people we had another way. If anyone asked us what we were talking about, we would spontaneously answer: 'If you don't understand, go away!'[15]

Big People

In front of the Kupang market stood a neat row of shops selling household needs. In the corner to the north, separated by a narrow street, was an Indian shop selling 'cita cloth', mainly with flower motifs. On both sides of that shop, further north still, towards the beach, were two more shops,

[15] 'We bosong omong apa tu?'/ 'Kalo sonde mangarti pi jao-jao.'

owned by ethnic Chinese; these shops didn't sell much, but functioned more as residences – the house with a shop. On the corner on the right was a photographer, a Chinese married to a Sabunese. In front of it was a streetside foodstall that closed down early in the 1970s. For about a kilometre towards the east, on both sides of the road, there were rows of Chinese shops, with just a few houses or businesses in between them, owned by indigenous people. Between 2 and 5 p.m. all the shops were closed. Their owners were 'taking a siesta' (*tidor siang*), while the shop attendants had gone home for lunch to do the same: *tidor siang*. The city was deserted during those hours.

Tidor siang was a very common practice. Probably it was due to the heat. Lots of adults, even in the market and the kampung, did it. It was practically universal among civil servants. Should a guest happen to come to the home of a civil servant, moreover a senior official, between the hours of 2 and 4 p.m. the normal answer would be 'father is taking his siesta'.[16] Children were told to go out and play[17] so as not to disturb the adults having their *tidor siang.* As for us children, *tidor siang* for the adults was the moment we had been waiting for, because it meant we could play without being disturbed by shouted orders from adults. We had usually taken off before we could be told to go.

Although I only ever went to church a few times, I knew it was full of worshippers every Sunday. Church and Sunday was not just for worship. It was a place and time to wear one's best clothes. Many families were very busy on Saturdays making clothes 'neat' (*necis*) – ironing them with the charcoal iron – for church. Church was the place where people first wore their new clothes. The main reason to buy new clothes was for church – a church shirt. Indeed the very first thing someone did who had just gotten a job with a salary, especially if they were a civil servant, was to 'buy a church shirt'. At Christmas time it was an absolute law for everyone. You went to the Christmas service in a new shirt – 'a Christmas shirt'. People knew when others wore a new shirt. 'Ooh a new shirt'[18] is what friends, acquaintances or relatives said to each other at church. So church was at the same time a fashion show, a place where clothing sense was evaluated and shaped.

Important officials always sat in the front seats at church. Some helped out as 'elders', who arranged the Sunday service and circulated the black

16 'Bapa lai tidor siang.'
17 'Usir ana-ana dong pi barmain.'
18 'Baju baru oo!'

collection bag. Everyone wore the very best and newest clothes they owned. Officials who made gifts sometimes did it anonymously, but more often by name. One of the elders read out the amount collected over the previous week, complete with names.

At primary school I had not a single book, not even an exercise book. I didn't even buy a pencil. Nor did I ever buy textbooks at junior or senior high school, but by then I did have some exercise books and pencils. After grade 2 the slate was no longer used, and pupils began to write in a book. I remember ours were always coloured blue, with white-ruled paper and a white square label on the front cover for the name. 'Leces' was the brand. We used a pencil to write. Ballpoints were unknown. Even in junior high few pupils used them. But I was not alone. Most of my Dendeng friends didn't have an exercise book either, except Abe. That's why my friends, Tinus Leo, Ande Leo and Darius Dimu, and I called by nearly every day at the rubbish heap outside 'Ikes', an office associated with the hospital less than a hundred metres south of our school, looking for waste paper. We scrabbled over anything we found. Fortunately there was always something there, even if it was mixed up with carbon paper. These were our 'books' at primary school. We never took them home. We had a 'safe storage place', in a convenient hole in the big ironwood tree about a hundred metres before our house. In the morning we came past there and retrieved our 'book' and pencil. I bought no books because I had no money.

This didn't mean I had no interest in reading. On the contrary, I loved it. If there was a book, I would read it. I remember living at Uncle Ney Dimu Djami a few months and reading the H.C. Anderson fairy tales that he had for his children Moni, Welly and Wati. But after that there were no books in my environment, and no one read. At home, my sister Yaty occasionally borrowed a novel from Sister Is Amos Pah. There were almost no newspapers. No one I knew subscribed to a newspaper. To the end of senior high school I had only occasionally read a newspaper, except when in year 3 we tried to find papers for a wall magazine we were making. Nor did I even read many school textbooks at primary or even junior high. The primary school had no library. Junior high had a small reading room with a little reading matter.

There's not much to say about junior high school. I certainly did not stand out academically. In three years I achieved nothing of note. Socially, too, I felt a bit isolated. I never visited school friends at home, or had them over to mine. I had friends to play with at school, but we didn't visit each other. Some of them I still remember: Kele Bala, Alo Koten, Fred Kaseh,

Ako Nafie, Mat Kiwang, Yabes Kore, Paul Nggeok, Ney Hermanus, Alosius Dias Vera, Suk Dobleg, Alo Dembo, and some others who were quite close. But except for those who lived in the same Fontein neighbourhood as I – Dickson and Johny Hede (the kids of 'Ence'), Lius Kore from around the cemetery, and a few others – they did not become playmates beyond school. My playmates were still the kids from the market and the street, and, of course, the neighbours. I felt junior high school was a time when I had little self-confidence, not sure why. Maybe because part of my soul was in another world, that of the market and the street. I still spent a lot of time in those places, and often still travelled into the interior as a *papalele*, skipping out on school. Nearly every week I missed some school, and every evening I was running around on the streets.

This was, I think, the period when I became aware of class differences. I realized I lived in a totally different world to that of my other friends who only seemed to know the world of school and play. This feeling of inferiority is a bit strange, because not one of my friends ever questioned anyone else's background, and being hard up was the rule for most people in this period. No other student ever remarked on my clothing or that of friends who were like me. Nor was there any discrimination in general conversation. Everything was as normal as anywhere else in Kupang. Maybe it was because they were no longer my familiar primary school playmates. Several of my primary school mates were now one year up on me, since I did not continue immediately after graduating then. Until now, I don't really know.

In 1976 I went back to the market, just as we moved from the Pelita to the Oeba market. Until my second semester of year 3 at senior high school I spent most of my time there. There wasn't a lot to do except to look after our goods. Occasionally I travelled into the interior, sometimes I worked casually on a building site to pour cement. I spent time with my high-school and kampung friends. But gradually hanging out by the side of the road or at the beach became rarer, and communicating with my street friends became more sporadic. We were each busy with our own little worlds. Even with my kampung friends I mixed less and less, except with one or two that I had known for a long time, even though the Pelita marketplace was right in the middle of a residential area. But Oeba was a new environment for me. My life became more routine. Reading, mainly non-school books, became the new way of using my time. I especially read Ko Ping Ho martial arts stories. But I also liked borrowing books from the school library. The legendary Karl May serials left a big impression on me. I only learned after arriving in Yogya that Karl May never put a foot in the

United States. Time for play also decreased drastically, although I still did it and I especially kept up my self-defence activities.

The junior-high-school principal was Mrs Karels, a highly respected disciplinarian from Rote. Most of our teachers were either Rotenese or Sabunese. There were Mr Fandu, Mr Pingak, Mr Adoe, Mr Piet and several others, all from Rote. But there was also Mr Gomang from Alor. And Mr Alex Rang, Mr Riwu and several others came from Sabu. Our Arab language teacher – we had Arab at junior high school – was Mrs Bamualim, who was of Arab descent. Among the students, on the other hand, the level of pluralism was very high. They came from practically every ethnic group in Indonesia, except Papua. Our school even had a student from Australia. I don't know what his parents did. Likewise, our senior high school had the whole range of social classes. Starting from the military commander's kids (two girls and a boy) – until about that time Kupang was the centre of some military region whose name and function I forgot – through the children of the district head (*bupati*) Rol Adi and his younger sibling, down to kids from lower-class families such as mine.

Low interest in reading was the norm in Kupang at this time. Just a handful of people, usually senior officials, read the newspaper routinely – and that was when the paper was nearly a week old. Even fewer people read books. Among students, very few read even school textbooks. Lack of interest eventually forced the Cempaka Wangi bookshop to move its business to Malang in Java in the late 1970s. My friend Dullah, when I met him in Yogya years later, as he was opening another bookshop there, told me he had to leave Kupang because no one was buying books. Most books on display were not touched for years. People would come in to borrow a Ko Ping Ho comic and that was it. Another little bookshop, called Merdeka as I recall and located near the *benteng*, went broke and closed down before that. But the amazing thing is that reading the Bible was apparently different. Many people read it all the time, and had even memorized parts of the Christian holy book.

George Eman, who accompanied me to Yogya, became a closer friend at this time. Both Ge's parents knew me well, and my parents knew that Ge belonged to the 'big people' (*anak orang besar*) who were prepared to be friends with 'little people' (*orang kecil*). These terms were very common social classifiers. 'Big people' was a general category for all bureaucrats (*pejabat*). I suspect it reflects the Sabunese custom of addressing officials as 'Mone Ae' – 'big person'. The term 'boss' was also used, or even repeated for emphasis as 'boss boss'. We often said 'he's a boss boss kid' (*itu bos bos pung ana*), sometimes adding the word 'big' so it became 'big boss'. It was

used for officials and for anyone with money, including big Chinese traders. In the market, traders with strong capital were called 'big *papalele*' (*papalele besar*). The term 'businessman' (*pengusaha*) was hardly ever used. 'Rich person' (*orang kaya*) was only used when gossiping about a friend or neighbour who 'didn't want to mix'. Occasionally the phrase was 'now he's really become someone' (*su jadi orang na*), indicating social mobility for the whole family of someone who had become a civil servant. Lower-class people were generally called 'people with woes' (*orang susah*) or 'little people' (*orang kecil*). This was the general term for the lower classes, among families like our own and those of officials or businesspeople alike. Ge was called a 'big people's kid' because his father, a full-blood Dutchman, was a police lieutenant colonel, a former Dutch policeman who had decided to become an Indonesian citizen. As I recall he was one of the most senior policemen in Kupang, besides the Ully family.

Going in and out of the houses of friends whose parents were mainly officials like this gave me an opportunity to see how the 'big people' lived. There was little noticeable difference, except that my friends did not have to do any chores. They had a servant to do everything for them – cook, clean, wash dishes and clothes, and even make drinks. This was so different to the world I lived in every day, where we had to do everything ourselves. I also saw that their daily needs were never something to be discussed, unlike the houses of most lower-class people, where the problem of 'eating' was a daily topic of discussion. Children and parents always talked about the rice or the salt being finished. Parents in wealthy families routinely discussed 'appetite' instead: 'What do you feel like eating?'[19] Whereas in most of our homes the commonest expression was: 'Hey go and borrow some rice from neighbour so-and-so!'[20]

I also noticed their lives were much neater and more hygienic. The water they drank had to be boiled first. They washed their hands before eating, and some even started the meal with prayer. That was something we never did at home, except at Christmas and New Year (*kunci taon*). Their lives were so organized that they had a fixed time for their meals; and the same for drinks. Whereas in our world eating time was set by how hungry the stomach was, and you might say drinking time had no place in our agenda at all. Whenever they ate they sat down at the table, at a plate with a spoon and fork neatly laid on either side. Every type of food had its own dish and even spoon. We never had such order in our

[19] 'Bosong mau makan apa?'
[20] 'We lu pi pinjam beras do di....'

home. We usually just took our food straight out of the rice pot or out of the frying pan (*tacu*) whenever we felt hungry. We sat wherever as we ate. There was no dining table, no dining room. In short, the main difference between our world and that of the 'big people' was that for them eating was a cultural event, whereas for us it was simply a matter of survival, of filling the stomach.

Conclusion

During the funeral of my father in August 2006 I said: 'If I had to live my life over again and could choose, I would not hesitate to choose the same father, the same mother, the same family, the same city and the same life.' Beyond that, the long dialogue between the young Cornelis Lay and the old one – my method of self-interview – produced something new. I was astonished to discover that, in various ways, I was connected with almost every event and every place in Kupang. Whether this is the special character of a 'middle town' I don't know. But evidently every individual in a mid-sized town somehow becomes part of the complex yet paradoxically simple matrix of events taking place in that space. Almost no event happened of which I was not a part. There was no place in which I had not been. And I think all my friends in Kupang experienced the same thing. We were part of the process of creating and filling those spaces.

Fig. 8. PONTIANAK: An elementary teacher helps a forlorn student, waiting outside the schoolyard, arrange for a ride home.
June 2010: photo by S. Chris Brown

BETWEEN THE GLOBAL AND THE LOCAL: NEGOTIATING ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY IN PROVINCIAL INDONESIA

Noorhaidi Hasan*

After 9/11 many observers saw the sprouting of religious symbols in public spaces of Indonesian provincial towns as an indication that Islam was undermining the country's secular democratic system. Some imagined a future as bleak as Pakistan or even Iraq today, countries that are gradually being sucked into a maelstrom of political and religious violence. But this alarmist perspective fails to capture the realities of post-Suharto Indonesia. The mushrooming of religious symbols is also coupled with the rise of a new middle class and the flourishing of democratic activities. Despite the fact that some sceptics still judge Indonesia's emergent democracy as superficial and procedural rather than functional, one cannot deny that the electoral system evolving in Indonesia today is rooted in the opening of political opportunity structures, bolstered by social mobility, economic growth and broader participation in education and politics. The driving force behind this phenomenon is the middle class. Particularly in the provincial towns, its members have become active negotiators between the global and the local, and between the cosmopolitan centre and the hinterland. In their attempts to boost their identity and social status, the middle class is at the forefront of calls for the compatibility between Islam and modern values such as democracy, tolerance and human rights. They play a significant role in the way Islamization and democratization are interacting in Indonesia.

This chapter analyses the changing role of Islam in Indonesian provincial towns, as a new middle class is becoming more aware of the importance of religious identity for their social status and lifestyle. Focusing on developments in two medium-sized towns – Kebumen in Central Java and Martapura in South Kalimantan – it aims to show how two major transformations shaping contemporary Indonesia – democratization and globalization – are generating a public sphere in which politics and religion are subtly intertwined. Mass education and mass communications have facilitated an awareness in Muslims of the need to reconfigure the nature of religious thought and action, create new forms of public space, and

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encourage debate over meaning. Within this context Islam has become the subject of dialogue and civil debate. Open contests over the use of the symbolic language of Islam and its meanings have increasingly shaped this new sense of public space that is discursive, performative and participative. The appearance of 'public Islam' in the Muslim world has coincided with the emergence of a new middle class which involves itself in the debates about objectifying Islam. This class is mainly distinguished by the capacity of its individuals and households to accrue surplus income, beyond that needed for the necessities of life. Their rising demands for a more nuanced lifestyle urged them to adopt Islamic symbols as a mode of modern cultural expression in public spaces. Islamic symbols provide a sense of legitimacy and moral value for members of the new middle class, and a means by which its members' social identities are formed.

The trend for the metropolitan urban middle class to adopt Islamic symbols to claim distinction and moral legitimacy for their consumptive lifestyle has resonated through Indonesian Islam, and profoundly impacted the dynamics also in provincial towns. Due to the development of massive infrastructure and the advancement of mass communications, the boundaries of big cities and provincial ones have become increasingly blurred. Any trends that are developing in the big cities can easily progress to provincial ones. But they are not just copied. This chapter aims to show the particular way in which 'public Islam' has been appropriated in provincial towns. The process of appropriation also involves agency, shaping the form of Islam that will prevail in the provincial town's public spaces. The growing middle class is facilitating the burgeoning of a new form of market-friendly piety, which accepts the idioms of modern democracy. At the same time, this market-friendly piety needs to be legitimized by showing a continuity with local history and culture. Institutional symbols of traditional religion often resurface and require affirmation from religious actors who, in turn, have sought sources of legitimacy in their effort to offer Islam in provincial public spaces. This chapter thus examines the way in which the middle class plays a pivotal role as an agency facilitating the growth of public Islam in provincial Indonesia where ideas about locality, tradition, modernization and globalization, as well as ideas about Islam's significance for urban public life, are mutually reinforcing.

Islamization in Provincial Indonesia

In a country like Indonesia, in political, economic, cultural and administrative matters, towns play an intermediary role between the cosmopolitan centres and the hinterland. They serve as a meeting point and mediator

between the outward-reaching national (and global) culture, institutions and processes, and the increasingly self-assertive agricultural village majority. Unlike the cosmopolitan centres, where there is greater socio-cultural differentiation, a tension between the global and the local is often more explicit in smaller towns, where it is held more in check by cross-cutting personal ties. The global is spread through modern political, educational, economic and cultural institutions. Its legitimacy, however, is bolstered by means of the appropriation of key concepts associated with tradition and local culture. Looking at Indonesia from the vantage point of the provincial town allows us to understand how the local, the cosmopolitan and the global have intertwined in informing multiple manifestations of the complex relationship between the political, the economic, the social, the cultural and the religious.

This is not ungrounded theory. Provincial towns seek to manage tension between the global and the local by means of appropriation and harmonization, to some extent. This phenomenon is evident in Kebumen, the market and administrative centre for a district bearing the same name, located in the southern part of Central Java. This town has vast hectares of lush paddy fields that yield around 150,000 tonnes of rice per year. Ironically, based on the data on 'recipients of direct cash assistance' (*penerima bantuan langsung tunai*, or *penerima* BLT), in 2007, 46% of Kebumen's population still lived in poverty. When I carried out research for this chapter in 2007–2008, Kebumen was led by district head (*Bupati*) Rustriningsih and her deputy, Nashiruddin al-Mansur. It was recorded as the fourth poorest district (*kabupaten*) of the 35 districts and cities of Central Java. In addition, more than 17,000 people were recorded as illiterate, and 13,957 children aged between 7 and 15 years were not enrolled in school. The school drop-out rate was also very high. It was reported that more than 66,000 people had not completed their primary education. The high numbers of illiterates and school dropouts explain why 96,024 families in Kebumen (or 30.43%) are classified as poor or 'pre-prosperous' (*prasejahtera*) and 75,052 families (23.78%) are in the slightly higher socio-economic status group 'prosperous 1' (*sejahtera 1*). More shocking still, 35,311 people, from a total of 315,591 people in the productive age group, were unemployed. The high unemployment rate is correlated with the fact that a huge number of Kebumen workers have migrated for greener pastures abroad (Bappeda Kabupaten Kebumen 2006).

Despite its claimed status as a *santri* town (*kota santri*) with 99% of its population being Muslim, Kebumen had never strongly supported Islamic parties. No Islamic party had won a majority since the first elections in

1955. However, *kyai,* traditional religious scholars known as *ulama* in Java, do have an important cultural influence in Kebumen. The latest data show that the district has 121 *pesantren,* traditional Islamic boarding schools led by *kyai*. These religious leaders have long held a special position in the Kebumen community, as reported by the sociologist Jennifer Alexander during her observations in the 1980s. Her research primarily examined economic development, and took place in a district located to the east of Kebumen. She concluded that Clifford Geertz's characterization of Javanese society as being divided into *santri, abangan* and *priyayi* groups was not relevant in Kebumen. Geertz's *santri* group practised orthodox Islam, while the *abangan* population practised a more syncretic, Javanese-flavoured version. The *priyayi* were drawn from the traditional Javanese aristocratic class, and often held responsible administrative positions. According to Alexander, in Kebumen people tended to reject the *santri/abangan* distinction and the trichotomy *santri/abangan/priyayi.* They generally pictured themselves as Muslims with a firm commitment to Indonesian nationalism (Alexander 1987:16). Unlike other orthodox *santri*, who stress the formalization of religious expression and the pursuit of piety and orthopraxy, the majority of the population Alexander described were able to strike a compromise between Islam, traditional values and indigenous culture.

Kebumen is probably better pictured as a place where Islamic-Javanese moderate practices prevail and *abangan* beliefs are still alive. The military has described several isolated districts in Kebumen as 'red spots', once under the domination of Communist influences. Kebumen has also been described as a 'tinderbox', or a place where both the political extreme left and extreme right could be found. In 1950 a religious rebellion exploded in Kebumen as a consequence of rationalization within the body of the Indonesian Republic Armed Forces. This rebellion was led by a local militant leader, Machfudz Abdurrahman, the owner of the Al-Kahfi Islamic boarding school in Sumolangu and more popularly known as Kyai Sumolangu. He refused to merge with the 'Lemah Abang Battalion' formed by the army. Instead, he formed his own battalion, known as the Chimayatul Islam. Unfortunately negotiations between the *kyai* and the army ended in disagreement, and as a result a confrontation with the army was inevitable.[1] Given this historical peculiarity, the

[1] Several scholars believe that the Angkatan Umat Islam (AUI, Islamic Congregation Force), a rebellious movement in Kebumen in the early 1950s, had connections with the wider regional rebellion of that era led by S.M. Kartosuwiryo and known as Darul Islam/ Tentara Islam Indonesia (DI/TII, House of Islam/ Indonesian Islamic Army) (Singgih Tri Sulistiyono 2000).

highest political position in Kebumen was always reserved for army officials.

Only recently have Islamic forces and secular power reached a point of convergence in Kebumen. A huge billboard in front of the regent's official residence on Kebumen's main square shows Rustriningsih wearing a trendy colourful headscarf. This was a new – for years she had been bareheaded in public. Her (male) deputy Nashiruddin wears a green turban. Islamic symbols have replaced Javanese insignia as the tools of political communication. Islamic nuances are being strikingly incorporated into the bureaucratic sphere elsewhere as well. As is occurring at the national level, more and more female civil servants in Kebumen are wearing headscarves and becoming involved in regular religious activities organized by the region's government units. Arabic maxims promoting efficiency and transparency are scattered around the walls of local-government offices. The increasingly conspicuous religious symbols in Kebumen's public places reflect the sustained penetration of Islamic orthodoxy into the heart of this *abangan* culture, and its attempts to move towards full integration as part of a modern, globalizing Indonesia.

As in other mid-sized Javanese towns, Islamic proselytizing (*dakwah*) groups have grown more active in Kebumen over the years. Young people are at their core. Their goal is to formalize religious expressions and introduce a more orthodox version of Islam into Kebumen society. Notable among them are the Hidayatullah group, which is under the auspices of the Al-Iman Foundation, and the PKS, which coordinates the Ibnu Abbas, the Perempuan Muslimah and the Iqra Club Foundation. Both groups set up educational institutions and introduced what they call integrated Islamic schools, in which the younger generation of Muslims are taught to internalize the principle of Islam's totality. These schools are founded on the belief that the future of Indonesia lies in the commitment of Muslim youth to consistently follow the example of the Prophet Muhammad and the first generation of Muslims (*Salaf al-Salih* – pious ancestors).[2] One impact (among many) of the *dakwah* activities organized by the Iqra Club is that 90% of female students at SMU 1 and SMK 1, Kebumen's popularly preferred senior high schools, now wear headscarves.

The penetration of the new *dakwah* groups was not totally unexpected. Mainstream Muslim groups, such as Nahdatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, had long expressed concern about the weak religiosity and domination of

[2] Interviews with the chairman of the Al-Iman Foundation, Muhammad Yunus, and with the headmaster of SDIT Al-Madinah, Abdullah Munir. Kebumen, 17 October 2007.

abangan culture in isolated villages in several of Kebumen's sub-districts, such as Sempor, Buayan, Karangsambung and Mirit. Although many *ulama* and religious teachers were aware that the new ultra-orthodox *dakwah* groups might challenge their established religious practices and give new expression to their faith, they generally welcomed them as partners in the struggle for the glorification of Islam (*syiar Islam*) throughout Kebumen. They even acknowledged the creativity of the way they packaged Islam to make it more attractive to the broad Kebumen (or, more precisely, *abangan*) community.[3] Fear of the way these new *dakwah* groups have expanded has only recently surfaced as a public concern. The catalyst was their systematic campaign to infiltrate schools, many of which belonged to Muhammadiyah, to recruit Muhammadiyah youths into their cause. A number of the Muhammadiyah faithful openly challenged the expansion of puritan *dakwah* into their educational institutions, in Kebumen town itself as well as in its sub-districts of Gombong, Kutowinangun, Sadang, Pejagoan and Karanganyar.[4]

The growth of Islam's public visibility can also be seen strikingly in Martapura, the capital town of Banjar district, which is located 40 km to the north of Banjarmasin, the capital city of South Kalimantan province. This district is divided into 17 sub-districts with 288 towns and villages. Since its establishment in 1950, the Banjar district's head has changed 16 times. The current district head is Khairul Shaleh, and his running mate is Muhammad Hatim Salman. According to 2006 statistical data, the total population was 464,148 people, comprising 238,162 men and 225,986 women. The most densely populated area was the district capital, Martapura, with 2,042 people per square kilometre. School participation has risen over time, with increases in the number of schools. Currently there are 350 primary schools, 39 junior high schools and 9 senior high schools under the auspices of the National Department of Education. The total number of students is 55,269. In addition to this, there are 217 schools at all levels under the Department of Religious Affairs, with 26,872 students. There are 459,124 Muslims, compared to 314 Protestants, 209 Catholics, 101 Hindus, and 98 Buddhists and others. Based on the same statistical data, there were 2,118 job applicants in 2006, many of whom

[3] Interview with Bambang Purwanto, Islamic teacher and staff at the Regional Department of Religious Affairs in Kebumen, Kebumen, 16 October 2007.

[4] Interview with Muhammad Dahsyad, a member of the education council of Muhammadiyah in Kebumen, and Muhammad Abduh Hisyam, the secretary of Muhammadiyah in Kebumen, 12 October 2007.

held senior-high-school diplomas. From this number, 1,136 were reportedly absorbed in various job markets and positions (Bappeda Kabupaten Banjar 2006).[5]

Close identification of Martapura with Islam can be traced through its historical trajectory as the capital city of the Banjar Sultanate before the Dutch ruined it in the war of 1859–1863. There, *ulama* played a pivotal role in politics. Muhammad Arshad al-Banjari, a charismatic *ulama* in the nineteenth century, was the first grand mufti of the Banjar Sultanate, under Sultan Adam's rule between 1825 and 1857. As grand mufti he integrated the shariah into the political structure of the Banjar Sultanate, and was responsible for issuing the Sultan Adam Law (Undang-Undang Sultan Adam) stipulating application of various aspects of the shariah, especially the ritual (*ibadah*) and the social contract (*muamalat*), in accordance with Shafi'ite legal doctrines. This historical trajectory explains the identity of Martapura as a town that prides itself on being the 'front porch of Mecca' in Kalimantan (Ariffin 2004:33–5). In addition, close identification of Martapura with Islam has much to do with the self-image of the Martapuran Muslims, who portray themselves as a pious, pleasant and polite society, thus differing from the other Banjarese clan groups, especially from the Upper River (Hulu Sungai).

The presence of Islamic symbols in the town's public space became noticeable during Abdul Madjid's leadership of the Banjar district in the mid-1990s. The Light of the Saved Earth (Cahaya Bumi Selamat, or CBS) was built on the site of the town square, which had long provided a community space for Martapuran society. CBS is a jewellery trading centre. The vast building is in the architectural style of the Middle East, and at its centre a huge monument stands tall, complete with beautiful Arabic calligraphy. The overall effect is that of a magnificent, stunningly beautiful palace. It is a prestigious project intended to enhance the image of Martapura as a town built on the trade in jewellery, as well as the front porch of Mecca. The image of Middle Eastern architecture dominating the Martapura townscape clearly illustrates the deeply penetrative forces of Islam. During Abdul Madjid's leadership, the Sekumpul Religious Study Group emerged and rapidly grew to become a religious, political, economic and social magnet for Martapuran society and Muslims in South Kalimantan in general. This study group was founded in the early 1990s by

[5] Interview with Ahmad Rabbani, staff at the Regional Development Planning Board of the Banjar district. See also the annual report by the Regional Development Planning Board of Banjar (Bappeda Kabupaten Banjar 2006).

Zaini Gani, better known as Guru Zaini, a charismatic cleric who then decided to move from his old residence in Keraton sub-district to live in Sekumpul. At that time Sekumpul was a quiet, desolate area, full of *karamunting* trees. The presence of Sekumpul is emblematic of the growing importance of Islam in Martapura's public sphere. As a provincial town located outside of Java, which sees itself as marginalized in the highly centralized process of national development, Martapura has drawn strength from Islamic symbols to reinforce its local identity and, thereby, negotiate its position in the face of the central government.

Middle Class and Lifestyle

Earlier debates on Indonesia's middle class paid scant attention to Muslim groups, while recognizing their existence as one of the drivers of change, together with the entrepreneurial and professional intermediate groups and the officer corps. However, given the antagonistic relations between Suharto's New Order and Islam, Muslim groups tended to be excluded from the circles privileged to benefit from this change. Those circles did include entrepreneurs, professionals and military political managers, who shared a common interest not only in preserving their acquired comfort and status, but also in restraining Islamic political claims (Lev 1990).[6] Historically speaking, Islamic political forces had long been the main opponent of the bureaucracy, standing on the front line to challenge secular power (Samson 1972; Kuntowijoyo 1990).

The failure to make Islam a formal part of the state system served as a catalyst for the emergence of a Muslim middle class, centred around professionals, civil servants, intellectuals and military officers (Wahid 1990:22–4). They came from *santri-priyayi* families, in the Geertzian paradigm, who sent their sons and daughters to modern schools and through this route propelled them into various economic and bureaucratic sectors to become professionals in both state and private companies, expert staff assisting the ministers, members of parliament, directors general, heads of sub-directorates and many other strategic positions. This process of

[6] Lev's analysis received a critical remark from William Liddle, who saw growing interests among the middle class to trade their independence for a larger share of the benefits of state largesse. Liddle had in mind the larger, modern, urban business entrepreneurs and professionals, as well as rural lower middle classes such as rich rice farmers, producers of various agricultural commodities and even some devout Muslims (Liddle 1990).

embourgeoisement or priyayization in Aswab Mahasin's term, led the *santri* professionals to see Islam no longer as an alternative to the existing system, but rather as the inspirational base for a national, democratic framework for society (Mahasin 1990). The inclusion of *santri* in the bureaucracy and civil services in turn contributed to the New Order's marked shift toward accommodating Islam in politics, shown by Suharto's personal support for the establishment of the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia, or ICMI) in 1990. As a consequence of these changes in Indonesia's political environment, Muslim political groups have increasingly become the main patrons of the state, complete with a 'greening' process in the House of Representatives and the cabinet. From within the state system the Muslim middle class struggled to give Islam a central role in politics by repudiating the goal of an Islamic state, mobilizing ecumenical religious support, promoting women's rights and championing Islam-based democratic ideals (Budiman 1994; Anwar 1995).

Fluctuations in Islam's political relationship with the state inform both the dynamics and the formation of an Indonesian middle class vis-à-vis the state, and this makes it difficult to identify the main characteristics of the class from a purely political perspective. The 'cultural capital' held by the middle class provides a foundation for the emergence of civil society associated with demands for representative space in political institutions. However, the middle class also has an interest in maintaining law and order, political stability and material prosperity, and this may lead to their support for authoritarianism (Rodan 1996; Heryanto 1996; Saravanamuttu 2001). Beyond political parameters, one can identify the Indonesian middle class by its performance in the public sphere and its consumer-based lifestyle. Howard Dick reminded us of the importance of the mode of consumption as a defining characteristic of the Indonesian middle class (Dick 1985, 1990). This argument seems plausible, since the 'mode of consumption' can be seen not only as a cultural representation of a class, but also as a political statement. Consumption practices, though overwhelmingly apolitical in intent, have significant political consequences (Young 1999:57). To a large part the mode of consumption and lifestyle of the educated urban middle class inspired the image of modern Indonesia promoted on the nation's television screens and through government broadcasts, and exemplified by the nation's leaders. The growth of the urban middle class itself is paralleled by the increasing popular acceptance of consumer patterns associated with modernization (Guinness 1994:285–6).

A sense of personalized Muslimhood has developed out of this context, which allows the middle class to demonstrate their religious identity through bodily, purchased practices and goods (J. White 2005; Bayat 2007). This model of Muslimhood is indubitably associated with their attempts to construct new narratives of themselves and their place in the world from creative blends of their own cultural inheritance and global influences (Heryanto 1999). In the words of Göle, the Muslimhood model has enabled Muslims to experience the 'banalization process'. Actors from diverse backgrounds are involved in shaping the face of Islam in the public space and entering into the modern urban space with little hesitation. By using global communication networks they participate in public debates, track patterns of consumption and study the rules of the market, while at the same time embracing individualistic, professional and consumerist values (Göle 2006).

Seen from this perspective, Islamic symbols seem significant to class mobility and the formation of the new middle class. In contrast to the old bourgeoisie, the new middle class, according to Bourdieu, no longer prioritizes the ascetic ethic of production and accumulation, but favours a morality of consumption based on credit, spending and enjoyment. This is in line with his understanding about power as culturally and symbolically created, and constantly re-legitimized through an interplay of agency and structure. The main way this happens is through what he calls 'habitus', which is associated with the way in which actors calculate and determine future actions based on existing norms, rules and values representing existing conditions. In Bourdieu's words, the term habitus refers to '[s]ystems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them' (Bourdieu 1977:72). Within this context Bourdieu sees social class as something not defined solely by a position in the relations of production, but by the habitus which is normally associated with that position (Navarro 2006).

The work of Bourdieu provides a useful conceptual framework for understanding the new Muslim middle class's choice of Islamic symbols as the way to encourage the reproduction of privileges. They live in a social world driven by a new economy which judges people by their capacity for consumption, their standard of living and their lifestyle, as much as

by their capacity for production. Bourdieu's scheme indeed associates the new middle class with symbolic consumption and post-modernity (Bourdieu 1984:310). This allows us to investigate the new middle class's conception of lifestyle in relation to its habitus, and its concern to expand and legitimate its own particular dispositions and way of life. The nexus between habitus, consumption and lifestyle proposed by Bourdieu is central to the new middle class's strengthening of its symbolic capital by promoting cultural forms other than those enshrined in traditional middle-class virtues, and thus to its struggle with the traditional middle class (Featherstone 1987:158). To be sure, in Bourdieu's quite distinct definition of class, cultural factors are seen to operate alongside economic ones.

As a matter of fact, the rising consciousness among the new Muslim middle class of the importance of Islamic symbols, with its willingness to engage in debate and objectify religion, looked to the availability of religious space within the urban landscape of big cities. In view of the growing demands for such space, governmental and business offices built mosques and *musalla*, small places to pray. Elite housing complexes and shopping centres provided meeting places for listening to public lectures on Islam (*majelis taklim*). Convention centres and five-star hotels advertised venues for religious programmes and Islamic study packages. Luxury Islamic centres, with a large mosque as the main building surrounded by training and educational buildings, shops and a hotel, have been built on large tracts of land in major cities like Jakarta, Surabaya and Makassar. The new Muslim middle class comes to these places to engage in reciting the Qur'an, chanting *dhikr* (the profession of the faith), and the like, while discussing various aspects of Islam. In this way Indonesian Islam has experienced a process of gentrification, favouring global high-technology and consumerist Islamic appetites (Abaza 2004). While *dakwah* has somehow become urbanized, new creative agents and young, popular preachers have emerged to work in both public and private settings. They offer a variety of innovative *dakwah* programmes in the interests of the new middle class.

The backdrop of this phenomenon was the Islamic revival that has swept across Indonesia since the 1980s. This had a profound effect on the urban middle classes' rising demands for Islamic symbols as a mode of modern cultural expression in public spaces (Hasbullah 2000). Islamic symbols reflect middle-class attempts to construct new narratives of themselves and their place in the world through practices of distinction.

The distinctions made in different areas of everyday life are drawn from history, memory, friendship, consumption and recreational practices. Their inspirations come from multiple sources. The symbols themselves are subject to negotiation within the habitus of the class. In this way Islam has been transformed into a symbol of modernism and even elitism, and become part of a lifestyle. For instance the *baju kurung* (traditional modest attire of women) and mini *telekung* (outermost robe worn by women when praying), increasingly popular among Malaysia's Muslim middle class, are imbued with Islamic religiosity, whilst modesty, discipline and control are upheld. There is some experimentation here, symbolized by the exploration of mobility and gender identity of middle-class Malay society. Being most forcefully subjected to intensified Islamic requirements, women developed 'a strategic knowledge of dressing as a particular form of Islamic consumption, situated between public display of class and covering the body' (Fischer 2008:78–9).

A similar pattern of social differentiation is evident among the middle class in Martapura. Over time the fascination with Guru Zaini and the Sekumpul teaching complex drove thousands of middle-class people from Martapura town and other South Kalimantan cities to migrate to the Sekumpul area (Alhakim 2006). They built their own homes around the seven houses owned by Guru Zaini and his relatives, in the same row as the Al-Raudhah, the 'Kompleks Dalam Regol' (Complex in the Archway). The Sekumpul complex inspired the Martapuran community to the cultivation of culture and social refinement. Trends made popular by the followers of the Sekumpul religious study group have a wide influence throughout Martapura and other towns in South Kalimantan. For instance, the trend for men to wear the *koko* shirt and the white *kopiah* (a kind of rimless cap), and for long dresses and colourful *jilbab* for women, originated at Sekumpul, and this way of dressing is now very popular in South Kalimantan. Sekumpul's role as a lifestyle trendsetter for South Kalimantan's provincial cities has evolved naturally.

Owning a luxurious home in Sekumpul automatically privileges a person as part of the Sekumpul community. This community is very close, thanks to Sekumpul's TV, which features religious programmes from the Dalam Regol. The TV helped everybody living in these houses to strengthen their communal feeling as members of Sekumpul society. These houses are alive with activity for four days of the week, particularly on Friday afternoons when people gather to follow the religious activities held in the Al-Raudhah. After this, most people return to their respective towns and their daily routines as entrepreneurs, traders, civil servants, and so

forth, leaving only caretakers in their Sekumpul houses. Some people stay permanently in Sekumpul, and partly due to Sekumpul some of them have been fortunate enough to develop massive business networks, expanding the market for their products throughout southern Kalimantan. People like Sarkani, Norhid and Abdullah Assegaf have become successful businessmen in coal mining, the traditional Banjarese batik industry (*sasirangan*), precious stones and jewels, and other large-scale enterprises in South Kalimantan (Alfisyah 2005). Ismail Morsade is another succesful businessman living in Sekumpul. He was originally a Madurese entrepreneur from Sampit, Central Kalimantan, who decided to migrate to Sekumpul during the bloody ethno-religious Madurese/Dayak conflict of the late 1990s.[7] For Morsade, Sekumpul is not only a place to enjoy the overwhelming atmosphere of Islamic spirituality associated with Guru Zaini, who helped him to overcome the emotional trauma of the conflict. It also offers him socio-political-religious protection, and a promising arena to develop his business activities in South Kalimantan.[8]

The religious appeal of Sekumpul has made the community prosperous. Gradually, through its complex role at the intersection of multifaceted religio-political and economic activities, Sekumpul has come to be seen as the *'kampung urang sugih'* (village of the affluent) of South Kalimantan. As a spiritual market, Sekumpul is more than just a site for religious ceremonies and rituals; it has become a new source of religious and moral guidance. More importantly, it has become a medium for religious middle-class consumers in South Kalimantan's towns to seek a new identity and personal meaning – by consuming. At Sekumpul they can enjoy a spiritual uplifting by Guru Zaini, but after that they can shop for all the accessories and gadgets associated with Sekumpul. Most people do not hesitate to spend millions of rupiah for an exclusive Mushab Al-Qur'an (Qur'anic edition) signed by Guru Zaini, a *tasbih fuqah* (a type of rosary) or a Sekumpul-stamped *rihal jati* (a small teak table to put the Qur'an on). Even more collectors buy the *jilbab* and *kopiah haji* sold in Sekumpul.[9] Slowly, Sekumpul has evolved its own unique brand identity, sought after by its own middle-class market segment of loyal customers.

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[7] For a further account of ethno-religious conflicts in Sampit and other provincial towns during the late 1990s, see Van Klinken 2007.

[8] Interview with Ismail Morsade, Martapura, 20 February 2008.

[9] Interviews with Nafsiah, a religious figure who resides in the Sekumpul neighbourhood, 11 February 2008, and with Dede Hidayatullah, a civil servant who also resides in Sekumpul, 22 February 2008.

Possessing Sekumpul merchandise and accessories allows a person to undeniably claim membership of Sekumpul's middle-class community.

Commodification

The growing interest of the new middle class in the current wave of market-friendly Islam has spread to a large and diverse segment of Indonesian Muslims, and this means expanding market opportunities for products related to these activities. It is only logical that increased demand for the latest models for innovative religious expression has led Indonesian fashion designers, the garment industry and other business players to launch new products. Again, the middle class plays a pivotal role, not only as loyal consumers but also as commercial agents providing affordable 'Islamic' products that follow (or even set) the latest fashion trends. They distribute their products widely to reach even remote parts of the countryside. Religious commodification should not be confused with commercialization. It is not a phenomenon that exists solely to make money. Religious commodification entails ideologization of commodities and commoditization of religion; it is as much about selling ideology as about selling products (Lukens-Bull 2008). Religious commodification has in fact very much to do with the way religion, in this case Islam, is packaged and offered to a broader audience, and how this has produced a framework for the moral order of society through the objectification and systematization of Islamic values and practices as a normative model.

Middle-class entrepreneurs are at the forefront to transform Islam into a symbolic commodity relevant to an entire social class based on demands for lifestyle, modesty and enjoyment, and no longer simply as a set of rituals, beliefs and doctrines. Sociological debate about this phenomenon conceptualizes consumption in the modern age as one of the most crucial, defining class experiences, and an expression of identity and representation of the self. Since religion has emerged as a symbol of elitism associated with the road to success, statements of one's personal identity can involve the use and consumption of religious symbols, as can be seen in the Indonesian public sphere friendly to Islam. In the hands of middle-class entrepreneurs, the symbols of faith have thus become commodified as markers of social status. Miller suggested that commodifying religion has reduced religious beliefs, symbols and values into free-floating signifiers to be consumed like anything else (Miller 2004). As such, it takes them from their original contexts and throws them into a cultural

marketplace where they can be superficially embraced without being actually put into practice.

The heart of the commodification process is found in places such as the sprawling Tanah Abang market in metropolitan Jakarta, where countless tightly packed stalls are festooned with products from small- to middle-scale industries. These industries also operate in provincial towns such as Tasikmalaya, Pekalongan and Solo. They not only meet market demands, but also set market trends nationally. This reciprocal relationship is driven by business acumen rather than religious motivation. 'Islamic industry' thrives in parallel with the emergence of upwardly mobile consumers, who seek models of behaviour appropriate to their newly elevated status. But the end result is co-determined by those on the economic margins who 'show a fascination with the cultural codes associated with the wealth and power of the new elites' (Young 1990:57).

The sprouting of Islamic symbols in Indonesian provincial towns coincides with middle-class success in expanding their businesses. In Kebumen, many of them have been able to open stores along Sutoyo, Kolopaking and Kusuma streets, selling mobile phones, electronic gadgets, ready-made garments and much more. Market competition has been enlivened by the entry of new players, *kyai* or young figures who are closely affiliated with the biggest Islamic organizations in Kebumen, namely Nahdatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. One of them, Wahib Machfudz, owns a number of stores under the label Al-Huda, the same name as his *pesantren*, selling books, clothing and electronic accessories, as well as several telephone shops. Another successful businessman, Cholidi Ibhar, is a former local parliamentarian from the religiously coloured PKB (Party of Nation Awakening) in Kebumen. He specializes in selling Muslim fashion under his own label *Amanah,* in competition with similar shops such as Tadzkiya, Zahra, Mangga Dua, Tiara 27, and Asri. As well as these retailers, several young NU and Muhammadiyah activists, such as Slamet Faisol and Muhammad Dahsyad, have become wholesale clothing-supply agents to small retail stores throughout Kebumen. Other prominent business players from a *santri* background have arisen in Kebumen to creatively broaden the market coverage of local commodities. Among them are Yahya Mustafa, Ibnu Ashari, Mastur Soba'i Aziz, Ayub, and Slamet Faisol. Yahya Mustafa has become the most prominent of them all by expanding basket-weaving craftwork for export. He won the (bank) Danamon Award for his hard work. Another success story is that of Ibnu Ashari, now the owner of the Sriti plastic-cutting factory located in

Kelurahan Watubarut, Kebumen. This entrepreneur has an NU background, and was once active in the NU organizations Ansor and Garda Bangsa Kebumen (2002–2007). He opened his own factory after working for ten years in the Naga Semut plastic factory, owned by the Chinese entrepreneur Tan Han Jian.[10]

The establishment of the Centre of Muslim Economy (Sentral Ekonomi Muslim, SEM), in Sutoyo Street near the Tumenggungan traditional market, is emblematic of the emerging middle-class enterpreneurs in Kebumen, who have witnessed a marked shift in class formation. In 2004, SEM was built on land donated to the Darussalam Mosque, situated in Kebumen sub-district. In cooperation with an investor, 68 kiosks were built, but unfortunately not more than 10 kiosks in the front row were able to stay in business. The remaining kiosks were closed, or never even opened. A lot of effort has gone into invigorating this market, mostly to settle the debts of the wholesalers who invested Rp 1.2 billion for construction of the kiosks.[11] Initially SEM was to be a convenient shopping centre where the emerging middle class in Kebumen could spend their money and meet their growing need for 'Islamic' clothing and accessories, thus strengthening their class distinction. However since it was not modelled after luxurious shopping malls in Yogyakarta and other cities in Central Java, SEM never evolved into an important shopping centre bringing pride to Kebumen society. This fact indicates that marketing Islamic commodities by itself is not enough – they need to be marketed in the modern way, and not through kiosks in a traditional market.

In the middle of SEM's failure, the Jadi Baru Mall (JB) was built, despite opposition from the traditional traders and Chinese businessmen of Kebumen. JB belongs to a supermarket network centred in Kroya, Cilacap. It was built by an entrepreneur from Cilacap, Mahasin, the *besan* (relationship between parents whose children are married to each other) of an influential cleric, Gus Anam, from Leler Banyumas. The construction of JB was supported by local Kebumen entrepreneurs. One of them, Yazid Machfudz, is the brother of Wahib Machfudz, the chairman of the consultative council of Kebumen's NU branch and a businessman. There has long been a tight bond between Mahasin and Yazid. Yazid was convinced that the development of JB would bring prosperity to the Muslim community, because the owner is a member of NU and the mall would improve Kebumen's economy by attracting new people and new life to a part of

[10] Interview with Ibnu Ashari, 14 January 2008.
[11] Interview with Nurhadi, member of the Nadzir Darussalam Mosque, 17 March 2008.

town that was at the time deserted.[12] JB would have a special section for Muslim women's wear, complete with all the accessories and gadgets needed by women who wanted to appear 'Islamic' yet modern.

The middle-class ability to expand their business network by selling 'Islamic' products is also evident in Martapura. Realizing Sekumpul's market value, Guru Zaini launched Al-Zahra Productions, a brand name for the numerous merchandise, accessories and gadgets associated with Sekumpul. The core products of Al-Zahra are Muslim fashion, prayer/ritual attire and accessories, with its production lines located in Tasikmalaya and Surabaya. Al-Zahra later expanded its production line with the opening of the Ar-Ruhama bookstore and Ar-Raudhah publications. Both of these businesses were put under independent management, and Guru Zaini focused on Al-Zahra. Besides the ritual merchandise shops and Muslim women's fashions under the umbrella of Gallery Al-Zahra, Al Zahra now has business lines such as Al-Zahra Fast Food, imitating the model of California Fried Chicken, AZ Bakery and Al-Zahra Supermarket. Al-Zahra also produces its own mineral water, branded simply as 'Sekumpul'.

Al-Zahra claims the source of its business inspiration was Aa Gym's Management Qalbu Company, but with Guru Zaini as a marketing figure to target certain market segments, particularly in the provincial towns of South Kalimantan. Al-Zahra's major selling point was the fact that it was owned by Sekumpul, and it grew dramatically. Even after the death of Guru Zaini in 2005, Al-Zahra still stands strong. Its consumers are the thousands of visitors coming to Sekumpul every day. Although the popularity of Sekumpul as a centre of ritual seems to have faded slightly, Martapura still remains a religious and social magnet for the provincial towns of South Kalimantan, and the Sekumpul business enterprises continue to expand. The expansion has been backed by many succesful enterpreneurs, including Sarkani, Norhid, Assegaf and Morsade. The enterpreneurs have developed various 'Islamic'-type business enterprises of their own, inspired by Sekumpul.[13] For instance, a real estate company owned by Morsade has developed exclusive 'Islamic' residences in Banjarbaru, near Martapura, named the Ismor Housing Complex after the abbreviation of his name.[14]

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[12] Interview with Yazid Machfudz, 7 November 2007.

[13] Interview with Ridwan, Former Director Al Zahra, 17 February 2008, and Rizki Wijayakusuma, Ahmad Diauddin and Suriani, admin staff of Al-Zahra, 19 February 2008.

[14] Interview with Ismail Morsade, Martapura, 20 January 2008.

What we have seen here is the prominent role of the new middle class as an agency to facilitate the process of religious commodification. Agency here specifically refers to the capacity to realize Muslim interests against the dominant ideology that makes it difficult to reconcile piety and other forms of public religious expression with modernity (Giddens 1984, 1987). An active engagement in the construction of religious debate and discourse in the public space primarily characterizes this particular type of agency, through which a new form of interpretation and meaning is offered for religious expression and identity. Inherent in its efforts is a criticism of the hitherto hegemonic religious-establishment discourse and its traditionalism and passivity. In contrast to Saba Mahmood's (2005) understanding of agency in the case of a mosque women's movement in Egypt as centred on individual intentions to engage in self-transformation through passivity and feminine docility, no longer solely through the lens of subversion, agency in this Indonesian context involves the process of social transformation and strategic choices.[15] Instead of giving up religiosity, considered as a source of backwardness, it liberalizes religion from its traditionally subservient, passive and docile posture by turning it into a source of moral legitimacy and distinction to represent a modern form of life.

The fact that the growing trend for women in Indonesian provincial towns to wear headscarves is tied to the larger process of social change sheds some lights on the importance of agency in the process of negotiation between tradition and modernity. As Suzanne Brenner (1996) observed, the practice of veiling among women in Java represents both a new historical consciousness and a transformation of self that challenges local tradition as well as Western models of modernity. Veiling is thus perceived as an active process to produce a vision of a society that is distancing itself from the past as it embarks upon a new modernity. Indeed, veiling allows middle-class women in Java to live away from home and move into predominantly male social, political and economic spaces with a heightened commitment to the profession of Islam (Smith-Hefner 2007; Hamdani 2007). In fact, the headscarf helped Rustriningsih, the then Kebumen district head, to secure her position as the first woman to hold the highest political position in Kebumen. As well as her pioneering efforts to improve transparency and good governance in Kebumen, Rustriningsih's politics of veiling played a significant role in her success in winning support from the majority of the Kebumen society. No less

[15] For critiques of Mahmood's theory, see Haniffa 2008 and Jasani 2008.

significant, Rustriningsih's veiled performance became a style reference and established a dress code for many politicians, religious leaders and other members of the middle class in Kebumen.[16] Once Islamic attire was adopted by Kebumen's elite and middle class, the *koko* shirt and the trendy *jilbab* became popular throughout Kebumen.

Islam in Local Politics

Because of Islam's complex relationship with tradition, locality, modernity as well as globalization, it is hard to determine whether Indonesia has actually reached the brink of a post-Islamist turning point. Such a point could be signalled by a shift in the pattern of Islamic activism from revolutionary collective activism towards an individual activism which accepts the imperatives of modern life. If the first is shaped by ideologies, what Bayat calls 'post-Islamism' distances itself from political nuances and collective militancy, whilst still ensuring harmonization and parallelism between Islam and modernity (Bayat 2007:10–11). No doubt, the reality of an electoral democratic system that guarantees much broader public participation in politics, although this participation may lack depth, serves as a catalyst for the burgeoning of public Islam. It is a concept that refers to the appearance of an 'Islamic' public sphere which enables a large segment of diverse Muslims to make their voices heard in civic debate and public life, thus facilitating modern and distinctively open senses of political and religious identity (Salvatore and Eickelman 2004). Being embedded in a combination of public display and public discourse, public Islam constitutes a process of ordering and rationalizing that is expressed in Islamic terms and coheres into a unified normative principle. In so doing, it plays a significant role in channelling social change, securing social order and promoting grass-roots democratization in Muslim societies (Salvatore 1996). In other words, public Islam is a process that sheds some light on the significance of religion in the dynamics of public life of contemporary Muslim societies.

The growth of religion's public visibility in today's politics is actually not unique to Muslims. As Casanova (1994) has argued, religions in the globalizing era have entered the public sphere and the arena of political contestation to participate in the very struggles that define and set the

[16] Interview with Dawamuddin Masdar, an NU leader in Kebumen, Kebumen, 9 January 2008.

modern boundaries between the private and public spheres; between system and life-world; between family, civil society and state; and between nations, states, civilizations and the world system. It is the era when the wall of secularization separating the secular and religious realms – which entails the privatization of religion – breaks down and faces a serious challenge. For Casanova, the appearance of religions in the public spaces of the globalizing era facilitates a new institutionalization of processes of practical rationalization and thus the fading of boundaries between the private and the public. By entering the sphere of public communication, religions are induced to a 'reflexive rationalization' of the life world, which entails a reconfiguration of the private-public dichotomy and of its boundaries (Casanova 1994:6–10, 228–9).

The burgeoning of public Islam is related to the rapid current of modernization and globalization and the nation's ongoing democratic consolidation. Following the shift towards a consumerist society as a result of globalization, religion is experiencing commodification as piety becomes part of the drama of self–identity and representation, and the statement of the self in the public space. As an alternative to religious radicalism, it offers Muslims a way to actualize religious beliefs and values while still following the path of modernity and globalization, without plunging into violence and joining a cycle of militancy. Democratic values, which form the foundations of practical Islam and the politics of contemporary Muslim society, suggest that being a democratic Muslim is no longer an oxymoron (Nasr 2005).

The complex relationship between Islam and democracy is made manifest when its symbols have assumed a greater significance in the dynamics of local politics. The importance of religious symbols in local politics lies in their ability to legitimize elites in power, and their collaborators, as they attempt to respond to challenges from the opposition, including militant Islamists. This has led those in power to appropriate religious symbols and Islamist idioms for the instrumental purpose of claiming the mantle of Islam and delegitimizing the Islamist opposition, while simultaneously producing more harmonious state–society relations (Nasr 2001; Liow 2009). By mobilizing religious symbols, new political elites from a *santri* background with links to prominent *ulama* and their *pesantren* were in effect renegotiating the boundaries of political power, economic arrangements and group identities. Interestingly, when a multiplicity of actors has the opportunity to interpret the symbols, each in accordance with their own interests, the Islamists' attempt to dominate the symbolic

interpretation and thereby transform the country's secular democracy into an Islamic state has increasingly lost ground. Religious symbols have irrefutably been distanced from their religious moorings and from narrow, Islamist understandings, in favour of pragmatic political purposes.

This phenomenon often looks like a paradox. Democracy requires a liberation of public spaces from the domination of narrow religious, ethnic and primal sentiments. If these were to resurface in the political arena they could affect the very process of democratic consolidation. But on the other hand, religious symbols may play a pivotal role in political mobilization. They can legitimize the ruling elite and provide the means for them to counter and deligitimize their opposition, including the militant Islamists. The situation is rendered more complex by the fact that democracy cannot deny interest groups access to those same symbols, which they can then use to pursue their own narrow, group-specific interests. In exchange for support in local elections, for instance, regional political leaders may well exploit religious symbols and align themselves with the religious majority in decision making. By ignoring the basic principles of democracy, regional autonomy can become more corrupt and exploitative than the highly centralized government of the New Order, and thus become a stumbling block to achieving the public good.

When Indonesia adopted regional autonomy and Jakarta decentralized many (but not all) of its political and financial powers, the matrix of power relations became more complex. The nexus between the interests of regional elites to capture power, competition for resources, and ethnic-cum-religious divisions seems to have driven the dynamics of local politics in Indonesia's many different regions. All these phenomena are in fact symptoms of the weakening of the central state, which interestingly does not automatically result in more democratization, good governance and the strengthening of civil society. As Henk Schulte Nordholt and Gerry van Klinken have shown, despite the process of decentralization, political and economic development at the regional level seemed doomed. Its process is challenged by bureaucratic sabotage, corrupt power politics, short-term opportunism and the absence of a widely shared vision of the future. Moreover, the relative weakness of civil society has accompanied the emergence of new forms of authoritarian rule and the continuity of existing patrimonial patterns. Particular bureaucratic and political elites mobilized ethnic-cum-religious sentiments to achieve their goals (Schulte Nordholt and Van Klinken 2007a). It should be noted, however, that approaching the issue from a linear model of democratization, these

authors are apparently more tempted to underscore the paradoxes of decentralization in post-Suharto Indonesia at the expense of the more nuanced dynamics of the process itself.

The case of Kebumen is again worth noting in this context. Rustriningsih represents the middle class's ability to make use of religious symbols, ideologies and solidarities and give them multiple interpretations to legitimize their own claims at a time when democratic idioms have increasingly gained ground in Indonesian provincial towns. As a successful, 35-year-old woman wearing a colourful headscarf and a fashionable two-piece suit (with a long skirt) for her public performances, Rustriningsih's new image spoke loudly of the compatibility of Islam with modernity. She responded to the harsh critiques of her Islamist rivals, especially those in the Front Thariqatul Jihad (FTJ), who questioned her *abangan* background as being unfriendly to Islam. She also challenged Islamists' and conservative Muslims' repudiation of women in public spaces, and their right to a political position in the male-dominated region of Kebumen. The wearing of a headscarf certainly did not indicate Rustriningsih's agreement with the Islamists' agenda, by which public moral order and personal behaviour should be governed according to the precepts of a militant Islamist ideology. Rather, her headscarf can be seen as evidence of the gender struggle to reconstruct the segregating social norms that subordinate women. Thus Rustriningsih was exercising public agency to deconstruct social taboos, and to reconfigure the collective social imagination to accept that being a good Muslim woman does not require withdrawal from public spaces and social relations (Mahmood 2005:5–10). Becoming a good Muslim woman may instead mean having the courage to stand tall in public, and to lead others through change for the better. Once Rustriningsih started wearing a headscarf she no longer hesitated to talk about good governance, democracy and poverty reduction.

The importance of religious symbols in the dynamics of local politics following Suharto's demise appears also to be linked to incremental efforts by district- and municipal- level governments to redefine their regional identities. Suharto's highly centralized New Order government discouraged real regional identity, and maintained close control over the resources of the nation's various regions, as well as their political and economic development. In fact, 'the New Order government was ethnocentrically controlled by the Javanese, and therefore, all forms of Javanese culture supported and underpinned the regime's cultural policies and imaginings' (Clegg 2008:177). This 'Javanization' of Indonesia was increasingly seen as exerting a strangehold on the lives of the Indonesian people.

Especially outside of Java, many felt that they had never really enjoyed the fruits of 30 years of New Order development, but instead bore the brunt of corruption, collusion and nepotism from the centre (Priyambudi Sulistiyanto and Erb 2005). Law No. 22/1999 on local autonomy was therefore welcomed with enthusiasm. This law drastically limited the authority of the central government, and devolved considerable authority to district governments, thereby strengthening the position of the local government at the district and municipal levels (Pratikno 2005). Despite the fact that regional, religious and ethnic identity politics assumed much greater importance, decentralization is widely recognized as a major and necessary step towards nurturing a flourishing democracy by giving space for people to participate in local political processes (Priyambudi Sulistiyono and Erb 2005; Schulte Nordholt and Van Klinken 2007a).

Local-elite political groups adopted a range of strategies to redefine and strengthen regional identity as a means of increasing their electoral support. As well as reinventing historical legacies and memories, they mobilized religious symbols and other forms of cultural capital, including support from the *ulama*. As evident in the case of Martapura, Rudy Ariffin sought to secure sympathy and support from the *ulama* shortly after he was elected as the district head in 2000. The most charismatic *ulama* in Martapura, Guru Zaini, did not initially support Ariffin and his running partner, Mawardi Abbas. Yet to have Guru Zaini's support could be enormously important. As the *murshid* (Sufi adept) of the Sammaniyah Sufi Order, he had wide influence among Muslims throughout Kalimantan. Ariffin made all-out efforts to persuade Guru Zaini. His relentless efforts were blessed with a stroke of good luck when he was made responsible for arranging President Abdurrahman Wahid's visit to Sekumpul in 2001, thus providing him a golden opportunity to make closer contact with Guru Zaini.[17]

Ariffin's drive to reinforce the image of Martapura as the front porch of Mecca underpinned his proposal to enact shariah by-laws. For the political elite of Martapura, the complete congruence of Islam and Banjarese culture is unrefutable. Referring to the thesis proposed by local anthropologist Alfani Daud, the main conceptor of the by-laws insisted that 'Islam is Banjar and Banjar is Islam.' In his opinion, however, the pressures of rapid modernization and globalization and Jakarta-centric

[17] Interview with Anang Armawan, former *bupati* candidate, Martapura, 10 February 2008, and with Fauzan Saleh, the chairman of the executive council of the NU branch in Martapura, 13 February 2008.

development had resulted in the fading influence of Islam as the most important source of reference among the Banjarese people. As a consequence, social problems and moral diseases such as gambling, adultery, drug addiction and other forms of 'vice' had spread widely, especially among Martapura's younger generation. He argued that this problem is of concern not only to the government, but also to *ulama* and ordinary citizens, and thus urged the local government to enact the by-laws.[18]

Matters assumed a greater urgency when a paramilitary organization, Garusikat (the Movement of Muslims to Remove Social Ills), was established with support from such conservative *ulama* as Anang Jazouly Seman, and actively took to the streets calling for the shariah.[19] Its organizational structure and operational concept were proposed by Badru 'Ain Sanusi al-Afif, a former NGO activist who was also active in advocacy programmes. A daring religious teacher, Suhaimi, was appointed as the group's commander, backed-up by former influential thugs, including Hasan Sinso. The police saw Garusikat as a challenge to their authority, and eventually responded by sponsoring the establishment of a similar organization named Dalas Hangit under the leadership of Utuh Hirang, another former thug. There was considerable tension between the two groups, resulting in actual conflict. They only reached peaceful agreement after mediation by Guru Zaini.[20]

The shariah by-laws allowed Ariffin to systematically locate Islam at the epicentre of the town's bureaucratic orbit. What has been called the bureaucratization of Islam has taken place through a conscious decision to Islamize the government, and by the policies adopted to achieve this end.[21] When Martapura started promulgating shariah by-laws, every part of the bureaucratic machinery began competing to demonstrate its superior commitment to Islam. All manner of bureaucratic cogs in the government machinery became active in organizing religious lectures and other religious activities. To strengthen his policy of Islamizing the bureaucracy, Ariffin then issued a circular recommending all female civil servants in the Banjar administration and related institutions throughout the region

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[18] Interview with Mashuri, former chief of the social office, and now of the economic office, at the Banjar district, 16 February 2008.

[19] Interview with Mawardi Abbas, Martapura, 16 February 2008.

[20] Interview with Rizki Wijayakusuma, former NGO activist, Martapura, 19 February 2008.

[21] On the notion of the bureaucratization of Islam and how this policy has begun to work out, especially in the context of Malaysia under Mahathir's government, see Liow 2009:46–8.

to wear headscarves. Although this only had the strength of a recommendation, the letter made no allowance for women working in government offices who happened to be Christians, Hindus or Buddhists. They should all wear headscarves. They were made to feel uncomfortable if they did not wear headscarves in their interactions with superiors or other civil servants.[22]

When Khairul Saleh replaced Ariffin, the policy of redefining regional identity and Islamizing the bureaucracy by insisting on the need for shariah by-laws continued unabated. He ratified a proposal by the local legislators for a regulation requiring the insertion of Jawi (Malay-Arabic) script on office nameplates in all of Martapura's government offices. He claimed that this policy was part of his drive to disseminate the Islamic ethos throughout all government units and offices in the region, an ethos that packages the internalization of piety, honesty and good performance. His rationale was that the Jawi script uses the Arabic alphabet to write the Malay language, and this script had once been common in the Banjar Sultanate and other Malay Islamic kingdoms. Its significance for Saleh was that the Jawi script is identical to the alphabet of the Qur'an, which is the ultimate guide to Muslim behaviour in both public and private life.[23] Saleh is known as a *qari* (Qur'anic reciter in rhythmic tones), and he intersperses his public speeches or briefings with fluent quotations from the Qur'an and the prophetic traditions (Hadiths). Reinforcing Islam's public voice in Martapura's bureaucratic sphere, *salawat* (salutation to the Prophet Muhammad) and Qur'anic verses are often used instead of patriotic and national songs as interludes at important government events. Every morning, civil servants in the Banjar district listen to a short sermon, piped to their offices, on the importance of such virtues as piety, transparency, honesty and the ethos of meritocracy for the success of regional development, laced with Qur'anic quotations.

Conclusion

The mushrooming of Islamic symbols in the public spaces of Indonesian provincial towns after Suharto should be understood in relation to Indonesia's democratization process and the social mobility generated by

[22] Interview with Masnur Manurung, a Christian female civil servant in the Banjar regional administration office, 12 February 2008.

[23] Interview with Khairul Saleh, the regent of Banjar, Martapura, 21 February 2008.

the country's economic growth. The growing public visibility of Islamic symbols in towns like Kebumen or Martapura should not be seen as indications of the spread of a stricter, scripturalist interpretation of Islam. While it has often been argued that the anxieties caused by globalization make people seek comfort in stricter interpretations of religious texts, I have tried to show that economic development in Indonesia's provincial towns is also generating a more pragmatic and consumerist, lifestyle-oriented attitude towards Islam. A new middle class is looking to Islam for inspiration both to claim distinction and social status and to legitimize their consumptive lifestyle. The newly pious become active negotiators between the global and the local as well as between the cosmopolitan centre and the hinterland. They also play a pivotal role as an agency that liberalizes religion from its traditionally subservient, passive and docile posture by turning it into a source of moral legitimacy and distinction to represent a modern form of life.

The growing interest of the middle class in a market-friendly, Islam-based lifestyle has spread to a large and diverse segment of Indonesian Muslims, including those on the economic margins who show a fascination with the cultural codes associated with the wealth and power of the new elites. The expansion of market demands and opportunities for commercial products related to Islam facilitates the phenomenon of religious commodification, which is very much to do with the way religion is packaged and offered to a broader audience. The role of the middle class is crucial, not only as loyal consumers but also as commercial agents that widely distribute the 'Islamic' products that follow the latest trends to reach remote areas in the contryside. They are at the forefront to transform Islam into a symbolic commodity which is not totally uprooted from tradition and culture, but relevant to upwardly mobile consumer demands for lifestyle, modesty and enjoyment. The end result of this process is determined by the way in which Indonesian provincial towns are willing to distance themselves from the past as they embark upon a new modernity.

Given its intimate relationship with locality, tradition, modernity as well as globalization, Islam has increasingly assumed a greater importance for local politics. Political elites have used Islamic symbols for the instrumental purpose of extending their political legitimacy and mobilizing constituency support, in a political environment of open competition and increased public participation in decision making. In this process religious symbols have irrefutably been distanced from their religious moorings and narrow, Islamist understandings, in favour of pragmatic

political purposes. Thus the adoption of the headscarf (*jilbab*) by Kebumen's district head, Rustriningsih, in her official performance remains an empty gesture, or even a middle-class elitist symbol, unless the *jilbab* has become an authentic expression of her lifestyle. Seen from a similar perspective, the application of shariah bylaws in Martapura is best understood not as evidence of the growing influence of Islam in politics, but rather as the manoeuvres of the town's political elites in their efforts to secure their own interests. The by-laws nonetheless allowed the elites to systematically attempt to locate Islam at the heart of the town's bureaucratic orbit. Islam has emerged as a source of legitimacy for political leaders, but always in relation to tradition and local culture.

Fig. 9. KUPANG: Late at night, residents congregate at the edge of the main street near the mouth of their kampung. From this vantage they can sip tea, exchange jibes, and both monitor the comings and goings of their fellows while mingling themselves.
August 2009: photo by S. Chris Brown

IN SEARCH OF MIDDLE INDONESIAN: LINGUISTIC DYNAMICS IN A PROVINCIAL TOWN

Joseph Errington

Middle Indonesian cities like Kupang, capital of the province of East Nusa Tenggara, present a kind of linguistic puzzle.[1] There, as elsewhere in Indonesia, the Indonesian language (*bahasa Indonesia*) has uncontested primacy within a far-reaching network of state institutions, a rapidly developing political economy, the mass media and an urban consumerist culture. In these and other ways Indonesian serves and symbolizes the integrationist dynamic that has driven Kupang's growth from the time it became a provincial capital in the late 1950s up to the present. Its present population of about 350,000 testifies to Kupang's attractive power for members of the province's many ethnic groups, particularly younger people who see it as a point of access, through new avenues of geographic and social mobility, into a burgeoning Indonesian middle class. Yet fluent, standard Indonesian is not much heard in Kupang.

Even educated, middle-class people there commonly converse about sophisticated matters and in formal situations in a local dialect of Malay known *as ba*(*ha*)*sa Kupang* ('Kupang language' or 'Kupangese') or *bahasa Melayu Kupang*, 'Kupang Malay'. Structural similarities between Indonesian and Kupang Malay allow them to be classified as dialects of a single language, but they are sufficiently different so that Kupang Malay is far from fully intelligible to anyone who knows only standard Indonesian. So, after two generations of modernization have made the national language increasingly important throughout the country, including Middle Indonesian cities like Kupang, Indonesian's inroads into everyday urban life seem surprisingly shallow. Kupang Malay continues to be spoken as the distinctly native language of 220,000 people in the city and its

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surrounds, and is the non-native vernacular for tens of thousands of others (Jacob and B. Grimes 2006:510).

It also seems puzzling that at the same time as Kupang Malay has proven to be such a durable urban idiom, it is ignored and often despised not only by some of its speakers, but also by many teachers and government officials, who have a tendency to look down on it as a stigmatized language (see Jacob and B. Grimes 2006:1). Though differences between these two dialects of Malay are clear, both in their forms and social values, people are not always able to 'tell you which language or register [Indonesian or Kupang Malay] they are using' (C. Grimes and Jacob 2008).

These are puzzles I frame here as aspects of a broader dynamic of sociolinguistic contact in Kupang described from three related angles. Most obviously and concretely, 'contact' occurs between Indonesian and Kupang Malay when people 'mix' them in talk. I draw on recordings and transcriptions of casual conversation in Kupang to foreground two such contact phenomena that speak to these larger questions. This requires that I first provide the social background for two broader kinds of contact. One involves a biographical approach, considering the ways that Indonesian and Kupang Malay figure into the social trajectories of different kinds of speakers, who acquire them in different ways. From this point of view, 'contact' between the two languages is considered with an eye to the ways people learn and come to value each from different positions in the region's integrationist dynamic. The middle of this chapter suggests that distinct social trajectories and language attitudes can be broadly attributed to speakers I describe as 'natives' and 'newcomers' to Kupang.

This biographical contrast, in turn, needs to be preceded by an even broader sketch of the historical contexts, national and urban, in which Indonesian and Kupang Malay developed before coming into increasing contact with each other. This account is crude, but suffices to show how these structurally similar dialects of Malay have come to be regarded as categorically distinct although their elements are commonly used together. It is important here that, although Kupang may seem a marginal or unusual scene of language contact, sociolinguistic dynamics there have parallels in other Middle Indonesian towns. With an eye to this possibility I first sketch Indonesian's rise as a national language without native speakers, and Kupang Malay's status as a native language without an ethnic group.

The Indonesian Success Story, Reconsidered

Ideological and institutional issues have always been clearly bound up with Indonesian's status as the nation's standard language, widely referred to as *bahasa Indonesia yang baik dan benar* (literally, 'good and true Indonesian'). They are also obvious because Indonesian does not have a native speaking community. Nowhere in Indonesia, including Kupang, is there a location where people claim standard Indonesian as a 'first', 'mother' or 'native' language, and this issue has recurred in discussions of Indonesian political culture for fifty years. But it has not been considered a factor that shapes the ways Indonesian is learned and used by native speakers of hundreds of ethnic languages. In effect, then, questions about Indonesian's place in local communities can help develop a finer-grained understanding not just of the national language, but of the nation whose language it is (cf. Van der Putten 2010).

To develop such a focus on Kupang and its region, I call Indonesian a language that is spoken 'un-natively', rather than 'non-natively', to block habits of thought that are misleading in this context. 'Non-native' characterizes something contrastively, presupposing a dimension of difference between entities that lack or possess 'nativeness'. To describe English usage as 'non-native' is thus to contrast it with usage that is 'native'. But there is no universally recognized reference point for 'native' Indonesian usage, which makes any such comparison invalid. Describing it instead as a language spoken 'un-natively' blocks a tacit and invalid assumption about the ways Indonesian is learned and evaluated.

Most languages cannot be described in historically specific terms, but Indonesian can. Its proximate origins can be traced to the literate variety of Malay established for the administrative needs of the Dutch empire in the late nineteenth century.[2] This *dienstmaleisch,* or 'service Malay', served official communicative purposes across lines of language difference between regions, ethnic groups and colonial classes. As an institutionally defined *lingua franca,* service Malay was an un-native language. But thanks to its un-nativeness it could be taken over by an anticolonial, pan-ethnic nationalist movement that gave it new political purposes and prominence by baptizing it Indonesian (*bahasa Indonesia*) in 1928. They were able to pirate the regime's language partly because no group, Dutch

[2] For more on different aspects of this complex situation see Hoffman 1973 and 1979, Maier 1993, and references cited there.

or otherwise, had prior, 'inalienable' claims to it as a native language. So, too, Indonesian's uses and values have been shaped by the national project it has served and symbolized.

Recently, under the New Order, Indonesian's lack of native/ethnic associations transparently linked it to the state's self-legitimizing project of national development. Because Indonesian served to propagate a nationalist ideology, and was used in state institutions, it helped to naturalize the New Order's efforts to extend its power of oversight across Indonesian territory. The propagation of Indonesian was a state project, designed in Jakarta and extended outward to the peripheries, that served 'integralistic' efforts to overcome 'incessant and divisive polycentrism' (Elson 2008:248). Through a state-fostered network of educational institutions in Middle Indonesian cities like Kupang, it could be taught as an ethnically neutral instrument that assimilated those who learned it 'to the larger national identity…expressed only within its homogenising contours' (Elson 2008:253).

Fifty years after it began, the success of the national language development programme seems quite clear. Already in 1990, according to the national census, 83% (131 million) of Indonesia's population (157 million) already knew Indonesian (*bisa berbahasa Indonesia*).[3] Results about knowledge of Indonesian from the 2010 census were not available at the time of this writing, but will surely indicate that an even greater proportion of Indonesians – regardless of their gender, occupation, locale and ethnicity – count as Indonesian speakers. But this statistical evidence of increasing linguistic sameness – knowledge of the language's prescribed forms and meanings – provides no insight into situated particularities, that is, how Indonesian's forms figure in everyday talk and vary across communities whose members speak other languages natively. Indonesian's un-nativeness has shaped the ways it has spread at least because there are no self-evidently native, authoritative exemplars who can serve as reference points for evaluating how it is acquired and used.

Speech in any language has features that necessarily go unspecified in its written representations: the way sounds are articulated, patterns of accent and stress, intonation and vowel length, grammatical elements, stylistic variation, and so on. Learning a language from, or in proximity with, native-speaking models helps bridge such 'gaps' between codified rules, usually set out in prescriptive texts, and actual speech. But in the

[3] These figures are reported in Sneddon 2003. Statistical evidence for a more critical view of the project can be found in Montolalu and Suryadinata 2007.

case of Indonesian, the absence of embodied examples makes 'Indonesian' a kind of rubric for a range of registers or styles that are shaped by users' native habits of speech (Ewing 2005). 'Interference' or 'transfer' effects that result from native knowledge of another language can be ubiquitous and persistent, particularly in the absence of Indonesian native-speaking exemplars.

From a social and political point of view, heterogeneity in Indonesian as a spoken language is more tolerable than lack of agreement in values and functions ascribed to it as the national language (*bahasa nasional*). Partly because of its un-nativeness, the New Order could assert Indonesian's primacy over the country's ethnic languages without asserting the primacy of one linguistic group over others. This was done by establishing Indonesian's superordinate relation not to languages of ethnic groups, but of regions, that is, *bahasa daerah*.[4] As a 2007 report by the governmental language development office (Pusat Bahasa) puts it, for instance, 'national language politics' (*politik bahasa nasional*) requires that 'the Indonesian people should locate *bahasa Indonesia*, *bahasa daerah* and *bahasa asing* ('foreign languages') in their respective positions, each in accordance with its place and function, as determined by national politics'.[5]

Leaving aside the issue of foreign languages here, this statement prescribes a hierarchy between languages analogous to others described as diglossic. Diglossia is a term used to describe hierarchical relations between languages in a society, 'high' and 'low', whose values, 'positions' or 'functions' are hierarchical and complementary. Structural properties of a 'high' language tend to be less variable than those of a 'low' language. A 'high' language is also closely associated with institutions of literacy, and is acquired not as a native language but only by participation in those institutions. Its prestige is rooted in contexts of use associated with elevated and formal issues, including 'one to many' genres of public speech and writing. 'Low' languages, on the other hand, are those acquired natively from early childhood, in day-to-day interaction in the home and neighbourhood as the idiom of everyday life.

The report quoted above speaks to Indonesia's linguistic diversity by presupposing, without explicitly stating, that languages are bound to regions (*daerah*) by speakers who form groups that are primordially

[4] Further discussion with regard to Indonesia's largest ethnic language, Javanese, is in Quinn 2010.

[5] 'Seharusnya, bangsa Indonesia menempatkan bahasa Indonesia, bahasa daerah, dan bahasa asing pada posisinya masing-masing sesuai dengan kedudukan dan fungsinya sebagaimana dinyatakan dalam politik nasional.'

'native' to their respective territories. Notions of primordial bonds between people, land and language are common parts of nationalist ideologies, but in Indonesia they serve instead to fix differences between indefinitely many 'low' native ethnic languages and a unitary 'high' unnative national language. This is an important point here because Kupang, as I show next, has no place in this overarching view.

Kupang Malay: Emerging Koiné?

One reason Kupang Malay is 'ignored and despised' is that it lacks the sort of 'region' or ethnic group presupposed by the dominant ideology of 'national language politics', discussed above. In this way it resembles urban vernaculars in other provincial towns, and is worth considering with an eye to Kupang's sociolinguistic development over the course of sustained colonial encounter.

A variety of Malay was spoken from the time that the Dutch built a factory on Kupang Bay in 1653 among members of a heteroglot group (Dutch, Chinese, Buginese, Javanese, Malays, and others). Typological and comparative data have led Scott Paauw (2008) to conclude that in this way Kupang Malay is one of several eastern Indonesia varieties that originated in what he calls Eastern Indonesia Trade Malay, a contact variety that can ultimately be traced back to the ethnic Malay homeland of southwestern Borneo.

As a kind of lingua franca, Kupang's Malay vernacular expanded in use across lines of ethnolinguistic difference, particularly in the sorts of contexts suggested by one of its common names: 'market Malay' (*bahasa Melayu pasar*). Children born in Kupang had this lingua franca as a template or model for patterns of speech that they assimilated for use as a distinctly local, native Malay. However, usage varied depending on whether speakers acquired it along with other languages, or among people who spoke it as a second language along with interference or transfer effects from their native languages. Among those growing up and acquiring it in communities of migrants from regions of inland Timor or neighbouring islands (Rotenese, Sabunese, Alorese, Solorese, and others), Kupang Malay was spoken in ways reflecting their social background. In this respect their usage would have resembled that of older, less educated speakers in Kupang today, whose accents and other features of usage indirectly mark their ethnic background. Kupang's ethnically plural character was indirectly reproduced in a range of Malay varieties which were distinctive not just of the town, but of its various ethnic enclaves.

A comparison of the speech of older Kupang natives and younger people suggests patterns of change in Kupang Malay usage that have occurred over the same period that new social dynamics shaped the city and region. In the 1970s the New Order's integralistic project began to transform Kupang into an increasingly important node in a national network of state institutions, media, transportation and commercial infrastructure. Over this period Kupang became an attractive destination for younger people seeking higher education and middle-class occupations, especially in the civil-service system (see Wenty Marina Minza's contribution to the present volume). So, institutions of the nation-state are reshaping the city at the same time that they elevate Indonesian's visibility and importance as the 'high' language in a local diglossic situation: it is the language of official concerns, the civil service and advanced education, but also of the mass media and consumerist lifestyles identified with a pan-Indonesian middle class. Young newcomers from inland Timor and neighbouring islands, including those mentioned above, arrive as products of primary and secondary schools with competence in the national language.

Yet, everyday life in the city demands facility in 'low' Kupang Malay as well. This is the common idiom of young people who grow up in Kupang; they acquire it natively, as a matter of practice, and commonly use it together with Indonesian. Our research suggests that they do this in situations which, under a normative diglossic profile, would be restricted to the national language. In elementary schools, for instance, teachers explain material in Kupang Malay to make younger students feel less awkward and unfamiliar; in secondary schools teachers may use more Indonesian, but they do not reprimand students who habitually discuss lessons or answer questions in Kupang Malay, instead of 'correct' Indonesian. In universities students speak Kupang Malay with each other and with the teachers, who intersperse their lectures in Indonesian with jokes or anecdotes in Kupang Malay. At this level, too, it is a matter of pedagogical practice to permit Kupang Malay to be used to answer questions and participate in class discussion.

Our research shows that governmental offices present a similar situation. Kupang Malay is commonly used for conversation centred on official business, sometimes to the virtual exclusion of entirely standard Indonesian. Civil servants use Kupang Malay as commonly with each other as with those seeking their services; no clear line can be drawn between their habits of speech at work, on the street or in the home and neighbourhood. Children learn to speak Kupang Malay as easily with their parents and teachers as with each other; patients use it with a doctor

as readily as with a friend; a bus driver will use it with his boss as readily as with a passenger; and so on.

Put briefly, then, social dynamics have brought Kupang's vernacular Malay into contact with standard Indonesian in a broadening range of contexts and among an expanding, increasingly diverse group of people. At the same time, Kupang Malay is closely enough bound up with the urban environment that facility in its use is taken to be emblematic of membership in the urban community. As one young newcomer observed (using standard, written Indonesian) in a post to the Kupang Malay Facebook page:

> What stands out in social life is the language used. For young people, the language spoken in Kupang is more prestigious; it's as if they [that is, newcomers] feel obliged by the social situation to quickly learn Kupang language so as not to become estranged from their peers.[6] (J.B.)

Newcomers need to learn Kupang Malay in order to engage new contexts, new topics and, more generally, to meet expectations shared in their new peer groups. Another young newcomer to Kupang elaborated on the previous comment as follows:

> What we can be proud of is that no standard rule exists to protest when Kupang Malay is pronounced with different regional accents. Rather, speakers themselves will try to fit in with their speech partners or environment where they live.[7] (G.T.)

G.T. notes that Kupang's vernacular lacks 'standard rules' like Indonesian's, but that newcomers nonetheless acquire a sense of how they should learn to speak it if they want to fit in. This young observer recognizes, like them, that a stigma will attach to them if they speak too much Indonesian, or if their speech shows too much interference from their native languages. They learn this, despite the absence of 'standard rules', partly through strategies their more fluent peers can use to evaluate and 'correct' them in day-to-day interaction.

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[6] J.B.: 'Yang menonjol dalam kehidupan sosial adalah bahasa yang digunakan. Bagi kalangan muda, bahasa yang digunakan di Kupang lebih berprestise, sehingga mereka seakan dipaksa oleh situasi sosial untuk harus cepat berbahasa Kupang agar tidak menjadi asing di antara teman-temannya.' http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=1042044 02968840, last accessed 7 August 2012.

[7] G.T.: 'Yang patut dibanggakan adalah tida ada suatu aturan baku untuk memprotes ketika bahasa Kupang dilafalkan dengan aksen daerah masing-masing. Malah penutur itu sendiri akan berusaha menyesuaikan diri dengan lawan bicara atau lingkungan di mana ia tinggal. (Facebook page Bahasa Kupang).

For instance, a newcomer from Manggarai, in the western part of the island of Flores, may inadvertently let an element of his or her native language slip into his or her Kupang Malay, for instance, the discourse particle *ka*.[8] This habit of speech shows that they have not yet fully habituated to the city. It suggests a lack of urban smarts and sounds, in a single Indonesian word, *kampungan,* 'bumpkinish'. Soon after using that particle, though, someone more fluent in Kupang Malay might speak to them while deploying it as well, informally and perhaps jokingly throwing the dysfluency into relief. Strategic echoing of interference phenomena – intonation and stress patterns, articulations of particular speech sounds, lexical choices – can indirectly instruct less fluent speakers as to how to 'improve' their language, despite the absence of 'standard rules'.

Such interactional techniques presuppose and convey a diffuse, normative sense of what Kupang Malay sounds like, and they may be contributing to decreasing heterogeneity in the way it is spoken, at least among young speakers. Though we were not able to gather cross-generational data to fully document this process, young people's opinions of use indirectly suggest that they are participating in a progressive levelling of ethnic variation in Kupang Malay usage. Convergence between formerly distinct varieties of Kupang Malay would be analogous to processes observed elsewhere that result in a 'reduction of inter-systemic variation by a gradual abandonment of local dialect features in favor of more regional or standard ones' (Røyneland 2010:261). This 'bottom up' process could be giving rise to a koiné, that is, a relatively uniform dialect emerging from contact between several dialects which it progressively displaces. And if younger people are at the 'leading edge' of such a dynamic, they would be helping to develop a kind of Kupang Malay that is an idiom of 'innovative urban insularity', similar to others described in very different situations (Taeldeman 2005:269).

Homogeneous or not, Kupang Malay continues to count as 'bad Indonesian' for those who judge it by diglossic norms as being 'separate and unequal'. Certainly, they can find grounds for complaining about the ways young speakers 'mix' elements of Kupang Malay and Indonesian, many of them difficult to categorize on structural grounds. This 'mixed talk' is ubiquitous, fluent and communicatively effective in context, but is not uniformly valued or categorized by its users or critics:

[8] *Ka* marks the truth or salience of a preceding expression. For instance, in their response to the question: 'Does the top scorer get an award?' a speaker replies 'Dapat *ka* pasti'. This can be translated colloquially as 'Of course'. Word by word it translates as 'GET' *ka* 'CERTAINLY'.

> Many speakers mix Indonesian and Kupang Malay, and can't always tell you which language or register they are using. Some of these, including many university students in Kupang, think they are targeting formal Indonesian, but do it imperfectly and are often scorned by those who control Indonesian better. (C. Grimes and Jacob 2008.)

Part of the current puzzle in Kupang, then, is not just the divergence between widely accepted norms and practices, but also between different perceptions of norms and practices, particularly among younger, educated people. To understand how distinctions between the two languages are blurred, conceptually and practically, I next sketch two ways that competence in each is acquired by newcomers and natives in Kupang.

Social Trajectories and Language Attitudes

I noted above that young people born and raised in Kupang are comfortable using Kupang Malay in contexts in which, by official standards, Indonesian would be normative. Those who enroll in Kupang's universities and other tertiary educational institutions are joined there by newcomers from surrounding regions who also acquired Indonesian as an object and medium of education. But their native 'regional' or ethnic languages, much more structurally distinct from Indonesian, are also more socially distinct as 'low' or 'informal' varieties relative to prestigious, prescribed Indonesian.

Newcomers facing the practical challenge of acquiring the city's idiom, then, feel more sharply than their native peers the disjunction between Indonesian and Kupang Malay. Each language has links to different parts of their lives, and so produces a stronger sense of contrast between them. For the same reason, newcomers to Kupang can experience tension between two attitudes to Kupang Malay – as urban idiom and 'bad usage' – when they take habits of vernacular speech acquired in Kupang back home. The resulting tension sometimes surfaces in casual conversation, like that transcribed and translated in Table 1.[9]

[9] This is drawn from 42 audio recordings of spontaneous conversations of between 15 and 45 minutes in length. These were transcribed into an electronic database consisting of 55,000 records, each a short utterance or phrase.

Table 1: Prescriptivism in Alor.

I: Saturday I'm going home.	I: Hari Saptu be su pulang.
L: Going home to Alor? Don't go, I'll be alone here.	L: Su pulang Alor, ado jang dolu pulang ko, nanti kita sendiri saja di sini ni.
I: I'm going. Last night Mama phoned, told me to come home.	I: Pulang la. Tadi malam Mama tua dong telpon suruh pulang.
L: When I get off, when the ship docks, I get off and have to flick my tongue…	L: Pas mau turun ini, pas kapal sandar di pelabuhan tu, turun harus kuti lida ooo
I: What for?	I: O supaya apa?
L: So I don't use 'beta sonde,' no 'sonde.' When I get to Alor it has to be 'saya.' '*Saya* am going to the market, *Saya* am going shopping'… no, later you let that language sneak in…sometimes they tell me, the first time, one time 'don't bring *lu, pung sonde* here, we don't need that lu and sonde here, no.'	L: Supaya jang omong logat 'beta sonde' ko sonde ee ko tida. Sampe di Alor tu harus 'saya.' 'Saya mau pi pasar, saya mau pi belanja… tida nanti terahir omong su kecolongan bahasa … kadang-kadang bilang ini pertama satu kali 'sonde ma, hmm pikol-pikol lu pung sonde datang sini, orang sonde butuh lu pung sonde di sini tidak'
R: Kefa folks are like that too, *'saya, tidak.'*	R: orang Kefa dong ju begitu 'saya, tidak'

beta: Kupang Malay first-person pronoun
saya: standard Indonesian first-person pronoun

lu: Kupang Malay second-person pronoun

sonde: Kupang Malay 'no, not'
tidak: standard Indonesian 'no, not'

Alor: neighbouring island
Kefa: city on Timor

These young women had come to Kupang from nearby Alor two years earlier to study at one of the city's universities. When Ina tells Lia (neither a real name) that her mother has summoned her home, the conversation turns to a linguistic problem they all face. Lia complains, and her friends commiserate, that she can't suppress habits of speech she has acquired in Kupang, even by 'flicking her tongue' with a finger to try to get Kupang Malay out of her mouth. Still, she fails to avoid common Kupang Malay words – using *beta* ('I, me') and *sonde* ('no, not') instead of standard Indonesian *saya* and *tidak* – and becomes a target for criticism and complaints. Much as she dislikes being lectured about 'bringing that *sonde*' back with her from Kupang, she has trouble keeping the urban vernacular from 'sneaking in'.

Whether family and acquaintances back home aim simply to correct her speech, or to warn her against putting on airs, they invoke Indonesian's normative forms and place in the community, over and against the nearby city's vernacular. Recountings of personal experience like these throw into relief a challenge faced by newcomers to Kupang, who must not only learn to adapt to new ways of urban life, but also to internalize a new set of attitudes to standard Indonesian relative to Kupang Malay. In the city, as a matter of practice, the two varieties can generally serve to complement each other, but back home they are categorically distinct, 'good' and 'bad' language. Even if this difference only occasionally emerges overtly, as in the conversation cited above, it reflects a slippage between evaluative stances that also can be seen to shape views of the two languages we elicited during our research.

To study language use and attitudes, we elicited responses to a range of statements and questions using questionnaires. These were completed in the course of interviews with 30 respondents who were, like their interviewers, fairly young and educated. Most of each interview was devoted to gathering a range of information about respondents' and family members' social backgrounds, linguistic competences and reports on habits of language use in a range of situation types. Based on the autobiographical information they provided, I group and discuss some of their responses here as being provided by Kupang natives (a total of 17) or newcomers (13).

Of interest here are responses to two other questions posed towards the end of these interviews. The first, translated at the head of column 2 in Table 2, was one of five presented for respondents to evaluate by saying whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with each. Of interest here is the statement 'Young people in this city can

Table 2: Responses to two queries.

Social Background	# agreeing that 'Young people in this city generally speak good Indonesian.'	# answering 'yes' to 'Do you ever feel awkward speaking Indonesian?'	# agreeing with query 1 AND answering 'yes' to query 2
Native (n=17)	9 (52%)	13 (76%)	7 (41%)
Newcomer (n=13)	7 (53%)	5 (38%)	3 (23%)

generally speak Indonesian well'.[10] For brevity's sake I collapse their responses into the categories 'agree' and 'disagree'.[11] On this matter, as the Table shows, opinions were divided. A little later in the interview they were asked, among other open-ended questions, 'Do/have you ever felt awkward speaking Indonesian?' Column 3 tabulates the gist of their answers as 'yes' or 'no'. In fact some people responded at length, as illustrated by a few that are edited and translated in Table 3.

Responses to this second question correlate with respondents' social backgrounds. Most newcomers indicated that they never felt awkward speaking Indonesian, in effect claiming to avoid 'mixing' Kupang Malay with it when formal occasions demand it. Most of their native peers, on the other hand, acknowledged that they were unable to do this even in situations they recognized as presupposing standard Indonesian. This discrepancy can be mapped onto the differences between the social biographies of members of the two groups, sketched above.

Column 3 of Table 2 indicates the number and proportion of each group, natives and newcomers, who responded 'yes' to both queries. On the face of things these responses seem inconsistent, unless respondents were consciously excluding themselves from the social group they were asked to evaluate in query 1, 'young people in Kupang'. Given that this is unlikely, it seems that they indirectly contradicted themselves by later acknowledging their own occasional lack of fluency in Indonesian. It also seems unlikely that, for some reason, newcomers are better observers of linguistic life in Kupang than are their native peers.

[10] The original: 'Kaum muda di kota ini pada umumnya bisa berbahasa Indonesia dengan baik.'

[11] Two natives and two newcomers chose 'strongly disagree' to respond to this query.

Table 3: Selected translations of responses to open-ended query 'Do you ever feel awkward speaking Indonesian?'.

Male, 21, college student:	'I always feel awkward speaking Indonesian in formal situations, for example in front of class. I feel embarrassed but I anticipate by taking a long breath before starting to talk.'
Male, 25, college graduate:	'When interviewing for work. Because I don't use formal Indonesian often I feel awkward. I'm usually careful speaking. To overcome the awkwardness I usually prepare first. Sometimes I guess what questions are going to be asked, and then practise answering them in good Indonesian.'
Male, 22, college graduate:	'When I'm in meetings, giving speeches or lectures at the office, or instructions to subordinates.'
Female, 22, college student:	'Interviewing for work. Sometimes I try to break the ice with a joke. If they answer in standard Indonesian I'll answer in Indonesian. But sometimes I also use Kupang language.'
Female, 22, college student:	'In class, because every day I use Kupang language. Aside from that, if I speak with friends in Indonesian, I feel awkward.'

It is more plausible to interpret these responses as evidence of the broad ambiguity or slippage between two senses of *bahasa Indonesia*, as noted above. Query 1 foregrounded Indonesian as a linguistic competence shared within a segment of Kupang society, one the respondent belongs to. As such, it is easily construed as a question about differences in linguistic knowledge across segments of the city's population: those who are young, versus those who are not. In this context 'Indonesian' refers to everyday speech in which elements of Indonesian are used, perhaps with elements of Kupang Malay. Query 2, on the other hand, drew respondents' attention to consequences of their own failures to demonstrate competence in Indonesian in particular contexts. Rare or common, such occurrences obtrude strongly enough that speakers can recall and report them.

Those who provided affirmative answers to both queries appear to slip between these two perspectives or evaluative stances. Natives do this more than newcomers, who identify Indonesian both as part of Kupang's urban idiom, but also as a codified language that they have mastered, and

that is separate from Kupang's vernacular. This is an ambiguity that can be seen as grounded in two senses of Indonesian as a social modality: the language of 'modern', urban people on one hand, and of citizens of the nation on the other.

These views, in turn, are asymmetrically related, along with the metrics they involve for evaluating different kinds of speech. Indonesian's place in the fabric of city life is a practical fact, and people internalize it as such when they assimilate into urban interactional networks. Indonesian's distinctness as a superordinate code is associated with the nation-state that indirectly backs its prescribed norms. Thanks to its covert grounding in interactional practice, the first of these stances can endure without becoming apparent for those whose answers to the two queries discussed here appear 'inconsistent'.

Two Ways of Mixing Language

Given this brief sketch of attitudes to both languages, I briefly consider the 'microlevel' of contact between Indonesian and Kupang Malay. The goal is to present socially salient patterns of 'mixed usage' which show elements of the two languages excluding, co-occurring, and shaping each other. This kind of bilingual usage often includes so-called interference or transfer phenomena, which are effects of native habits of speech on use of a non-native language. (One example is the use of the Manggaraian discourse particle in Kupang Malay mentioned in footnote 8.) Contact phenomena can occur in patterns of pronunciation, grammar, and word choice. They can also vary from speaker to speaker, and context to context.

I sketch here two kinds of 'mixed use' that require little structural description. Both are suggestive of broader interactional dynamics within the setting sketched above. Each involves Kupang Malay elements in talk that is otherwise heavily or entirely Indonesian. To show how this pattern might allow for a distinct interactional style, I offer a few examples of people speaking from a 'middle' position, that is, blurring what otherwise count as lines of difference between their statuses as educated Indonesians and as co-members of a local community.

1) *Where 'a Kupang Accent' Matters*

Accent, taken to refer to distinctive articulations of speech sounds, covers a range of interference phenomena that commonly index speakers' social

backgrounds. But Indonesian's and Kupang Malay's sound systems are quite similar, and it is plausible to expect that contact between them would lead to a levelling of differences between them. If it turned out that speakers were pronouncing words of Indonesian provenance so as to resemble similarly patterned Kupang Malay words – speaking with a 'Kupang accent' – that could be taken as evidence of the local idiom's durability and speakers' unspoken loyalty to that vernacular. Conversely, if 'native' Kupang Malay words were to be pronounced in a manner that fitted distinctly Indonesian sound patterns, that would indicate that in this respect at least the vernacular is being 'Indonesianized' among at least some speakers. Younger, educated people are important participants in such dynamics, because they presumably represent a 'leading edge' of contact-induced change and model usage others may emulate.

Drawing examples from our database of recordings and transcriptions of spontaneous speech, I focus here on just a few items that do not fit either convergence scenario exactly. Consider in this regard commonly used cognates in Indonesian and Kupang Malay listed in Table 4. Indonesian members of these pairs are pronounced with closed final syllables – ending with the consonants *p* or *t* or a glottal stop (transcribed here as *k*) – whereas their Kupang Malay counterparts have open final syllables and end with a vowel. Numbers of instances of use of each pronunciation that occurred in the speech we recorded and transcribed are indicated in parentheses.

Except for *baik/bae* ('good'), the greater frequency of Indonesian pronunciations suggests that younger peoples' habits of pronunciation are being extended from Indonesian to Kupang Malay, since many tokens of the former pronunciation appear in otherwise heavily Kupang Malay speech. This could be taken as an indirect effect of widespread borrowing of Indonesian lexical items into otherwise Kupang Malay usage. These borrowings are routinely pronounced in the Indonesian

Table 4: Pronunciations of some cognates (# tokens in parentheses).

Gloss	Indonesian	Kupang Malay
'good'	baik (42)	bae (71)
'many, much'	banyak (47)	banya (20)
'main, basic'	pokok (30)	poko (9)
'see'	lihat (56)	lia (38)
'closed'	tutup (7)	tutu (0)

manner: the words *politik*, 'politics', and or *sifat*, 'attitude', for instance, are not pronounced with 'a Kupang accent' (that is, *politi* or *sifa*). In this way a sound pattern that is introduced into otherwise Kupang Malay speech through borrowings can generalize to Kupang Malay cognates like these.[12]

But a small number of cognates do not seem to fit this trend, and in our recordings are commonly pronounced with 'a Kupang accent'. These are the kin terms listed in Table 5. Standard Indonesian *bapak, kakak* and *anak* are pronounced with a final glottal stop, while their Kupang Malay cognates – *bapa, kaka* and *ana* – end with open syllables (and have slightly lengthened first syllables). That these latter terms seem to share a resistance to Indonesianization goes together with their distinctively expressive meanings in interaction. They serve to mark or presuppose something about the relation between the person who utters them and the person addressed with them. In Kupang, as elsewhere in Indonesia, concerns for politeness often lead speakers to avoid using second-person pronouns to non-intimate or superior persons. For that reason, kin terms or titles are common alternatives, sometimes combined with a form of his or her proper name. Used to speak of a third person, they can similarly mark the speaker's respect or feeling of distance from that person.

These Kupang Malay kin terms occur even in usage that is otherwise heavily or entirely Indonesian, as illustrated with two instances from our recorded data:

Table 5: Pronunciations of some cognate kin terms (# tokens in parentheses).

Gloss		Indonesian	Kupang Malay
'father'	full form	bapak (1)	bapa (215)
	short form	pak (92)	pa (232)
'elder sibling'	full form	kakak (6)	kaka (194)
	short form	kak (8)	ka (440)
'child'	full form	anak (180)	ana (426)
	short form	nak (25)	na (13)

[12] Thomason and Kaufman (1988) discuss other examples of change leading from structurally 'shallow' patterns of lexical borrowing to 'deeper' patterns of structural change. It is plausible to conjecture that even if Kupang Malay is not displaced by Indonesian, some of its features will be reshaped by it.

1. *Mo dengar cerita* ***bapa*** *tentang proses dan tahapan pemilihan umum tingkat propinsi sekarang ini.*
   (I) want to hear your (bapa's) story about the process and the steps in the general provincial election at present.
2. *Apalagi khususnya masih di Kupang ini* ***kaka*** *boleh omong seperti itu.*
   All the more, especially in Kupang you (kaka) can still talk like that.

These same speakers regularly pronounce words of Indonesian provenance (like *tingkat*, in example 1) in the Indonesian manner, with final closed syllables.

From the point of view of sound structure, these seem to be anomalous 'contact' phenomena that can't count as either 'interference' or 'borrowings' from native Kupang Malay in Indonesian usage (unless one chooses to regard them as having different 'meanings' from their Indonesian equivalents). Instead, it seems more plausible to say that these terms constitute a functionally distinct class whose elements modulate the interactional feel of talk which may otherwise be in Indonesian. 'Mixed' usage like that in examples 1 and 2 is unlikely to be the primary target for complaints about widespread inability to speak good Indonesian, but it is important as a point of assimilation of the national language into interactionally enacted senses of local community.

2) *Personal Pronouns, Personal Relations*

Another kind of mixed use follows a similar but clearer pattern. Listed in Table 6 are Indonesian and Kupang Malay personal pronouns, along with numbers indicating how often they appear in our collection of recordings and transcriptions.

Personal pronouns serve social functions like the kin terms discussed above because they affirm and modify face-to-face relations between the persons interactionally engaged in their use, as speakers and addressees. But unlike those kin terms, Kupang Malay and Indonesian pronouns have sound shapes that are quite different. Pronouns of Indonesian provenance

Table 6: Personal pronouns (# tokens in parentheses).

Gloss	Indonesian	Kupang Malay
1st singular	saya (29)	beta (470), be (271)
1st plural inclusive	kita (49)	kotong (183)
1st plural exclusive	kami (0)	botong (50)
2nd person	kamu (1)	lu (218)

figure very rarely in the usage we recorded, and Kupang Malay terms predominate even in heavily or entirely Indonesian talk (see Table 7). Most interesting of these is the last. The speaker 'quotes' a judge who is making a legal decision known, and portrays that judge as having addressed his own interlocutor with distinctly Kupang Malay *lu*, not Indonesian *saya*.

From a structure-centred point of view, such 'mixing' of Kupang Malay personal pronouns into Indonesian may be more obvious than kin term pronunciations, but they serve parallel interactional functions. From a social point of view, they can be seen as allowing habits of interaction among younger, educated people to expand as they participate in the broader geosocial shift sketched above. One can use Kupang Malay personal pronouns or kin terms in Indonesian without necessarily demonstrating incompetence in the national language; rather, this use reflects on that language's ambiguous uses and meanings in Kupang society. This kind of mixing helps speakers to neutralize norms that dictate a forced choice between 'separate and unequal' languages, and allows them to deal with each other as middle-class Indonesians and, at the same time, as co-members of a local, but non-ethnic, community.

In Search of Middle Indonesian

Historical, structural and biographical factors help make the language situation in Kupang seem less puzzling, because they bring to the fore issues of perception and practice, not just norms and competences. Examined through the lens of a 'national language politics' – from a translocal,

Table 7: Kupang personal pronouns in Indonesian conversation.

Bukan ilmu akuntansi yang *beta* terapkan di hidup It's not accounting that I do for a living.
Sebenarnya bukan seperti yang *kotong* buat-buat sekarang. Actually it's not like that, what we're doing now.
Sesuai dengan daerah yang *botong* menyanyi According to the region where we're singing.
Hakim putus 'oh ini KPU salah *lu* yang benar' ya silakan. (If) the judge decides 'Oh, the regulations are wrong, you're right,' then go ahead.

national perspective, as it were – usage in Kupang appears structurally *interstitial* between separate and unequal language systems. This prescriptive attitude to Indonesian and Kupang Malay surfaces in the city and regions alike. From a more situated, interactional point of view, mixed use of the two languages serves to create a way of talking that is socially *intermediary.* It allows speakers to enact middle-class identities grounded in both the city and the nation. Using the label 'Middle Indonesian' helps to move beyond norm-based framings of the two languages, and to see 'mixed use' as emergent and mediating in an integrationist dynamic.

My strategy for bringing subjective attitudes to the fore has been to link speakers' answers to queries about language with their social trajectories. From this point of view, newcomers can be seen as those who, after moving to the city, recognized practical limits on the 'separate and unequal' view. To become 'Kupang people' they acquired a distinct attitude and associated habits of language use that are common among people in the city more generally.

This sketch of Kupang Malay's relation to Indonesian is worth comparing, finally, to that between another non-standard dialect of Malay and standard Indonesian in another urban setting: what is now commonly called Jakartanese (*bahasa Jakarta*). Jakartanese, like Kupang Malay, has native and non-native speakers, but no strong ethnic association; it, too, was once officially stigmatized, as is Kupang Malay now, though it has also become increasingly uniform through a process of koinéization (Wouk 1991). Especially since the end of the New Order, Jakartanese is viewed less and less as bad Indonesian, and more as standard Indonesian's colloquial complement in everyday Jakarta life.

This development was in fact tacitly acknowledged in the 1980s by Anton Moeliono, at the time regarded as the dean of Indonesian language development. Noting that standard Indonesian has no colloquial variety, he suggested that Jakartanese might come to play this role not just in the city, but in the country at large. Dede Oetomo, who cites his remark, suggests also that this development was already in process at that time (1996:200). In fact, Jakartanese is now recognized all over Indonesia as emblematic of modern urban Indonesia; youth in many other cities, including Kupang, have made elements of Jakartanese part of their own distinctive argots.[13] But Kupang's youth language is also distinct from the much more widely known Jakartanese.

[13] Space does not allow for discussion here of Kupang's version of so-called *bahasa gaul*, or comparison with other varieties that have been described in Jakarta or Yogyakarta.

If developments in Kupang in fact parallel those in Jakarta, Kupang Malay, far from being marginalized, might in the future become more widely recognized and valued in the province. Though I have only anecdotal support for this suggestion, younger peoples' comments to members of our research team strongly suggest that Kupang Malay is in fact becoming more widely known elsewhere in NTT. Several young newcomers suggested that older people are those most prone to complain about Kupang Malay as 'bad Indonesian' when it is used in their home regions; they are also less directly invested in the modern city, and more sensitive to its influences, for better or worse, on ways of life in their own communities. When younger educated speakers like Lia and Ina return home as exemplars of urban sophistication, their Kupang Malay (and ways of mixing it with Indonesian) may be emulated by others. In this respect Kupang Malay's non-ethnic character would promote its social value as a regional language. Just as un-nativeness helps Indonesian serve as a language across ethnic groups in the nation, mixed usage and unethnic Kupang Malay may become the language and emblem of a new provincial identity.

This reading of Kupang's language puzzle places it within the broader process of geosocial integration and class formation in Indonesia at large. But it would be hazardous to generalize this sketch too broadly to analogous sociolinguistic processes in other Middle Indonesian cities. These other sociolinguistic situations differ with respect to the languages (and kinds of Malay) Indonesian is coming into contact with. The kinds of Malay spoken among ethnic Malays living in Pontianak, West Kalimantan, for instance, figure into a very different ethnopolitical dynamics. And where Indonesian is in contact with other urban Malay vernaculars, like that of Ternate in North Maluku Utara, broader ethnopolitical differences affect use of both. Whether patterns of language variation and change like that in Kupang are emerging elsewhere is an empirical question, but in every Middle Indonesian city, language change intimately mediates geopolitical dynamics that are shaping an emerging middle class.

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KITLV

Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde
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The present book examines this expanding Indonesian middle class up close. Instead of statistics, it contains ethnographic studies conducted in provincial towns, where most of its members live. Our studies confirm that the middle class is larger than previously assumed. The radically expanded notion of the middle class proposed by the Asian Development Bank, Roy Morgan and other institutions captures something real. But whereas these institutions are mainly interested in consumption, our ideas on the middle class have been shaped by more relational, political questions. Class is not essentially a question of income or expenditure categories; it is a political concept, intended to explain why differences remain between the behaviour of rich and poor people over matters of the common good.

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